DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 028 IR 014 082

AUTHOR	Hodgson, Vivien, Ed.; And Others
TITLE	Open Learning in the Community. A Collection of Conference Papers (Lancaster, England, March 1988).
INSTITUTION	Cumbria Education Dept., Carlisle (England).
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	99p.; Uneven type density/small print may affect legibility.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Administrator Education; *Adult Education; Bureaucracy; *Community Education; *Community Relations; Continuing Education; *Distance Education; *Education Work Relationship; Foreign Countries; Information Technology; Job Training; *Open Education; Refugees; Secondary Education; Staff Development
IDENTIFIERS	*United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The 18 papers presented at the conference reported in this document are grouped into four major sections. The first section, on the nature of open learning, includes "How Open Is Open Learning?" (H. Temple); "Open Learning and Community" (I. Cunningham); "Are We Really Open--With Our Learners and Ourselves?" (W. J. K. Davies); "Cross-Cultural Differences in the Perceptions of Open and Distance Learning in Britain and France" (D. Osborne and G. Lee); "The Production and Distribution of Knowledge through Open and Distance Learning" (S. Fox); and "Open to Question: Opportunities in Adult Basic Education" (J. Sanders). Papers in the second section, which considers open learning in the workplace, are: "A Paradox? Open Learning in a Bureaucracy" (S. Rose and R. Parker); "Open Learning within the Community of the Workplace" (M. Benwell and P. Hughes); "The Role of an External Support Centre in Supporting In-Company Learning Initiatives" (P. Critten); "Using Open Learning To Aid Management Development in the National Health Service" (D. Fisher and J. Durose); and "Increasing the Openness of Learning at Work" (R. Snell). The third section contains the following papers on open learning in practice: "Facilitation in Learner-Centred Programmes: A Self-Managed Learning Perspective on Co-Set Advising" (J. Cooper and A. Mailer); "Preparing a Study Guide to a Course Text Book" (A. Baker); "The Open University and Open Learning" (M. Richardson); "The Open University/Manpower Services Commission Community Programme--Barefoot Educators?" (A. Ballard); "The Education of Refugees in Africa: The Role of Open and Distance Learning" (T. Dodds); "Embedding Open Learning in Public Sector Further Education" (C. McAllister); and "Replan Open Learning Enterprise (ROLE): West Cumbria" (D. Dunstan). A list of contributors to the conference is appended. (GL)

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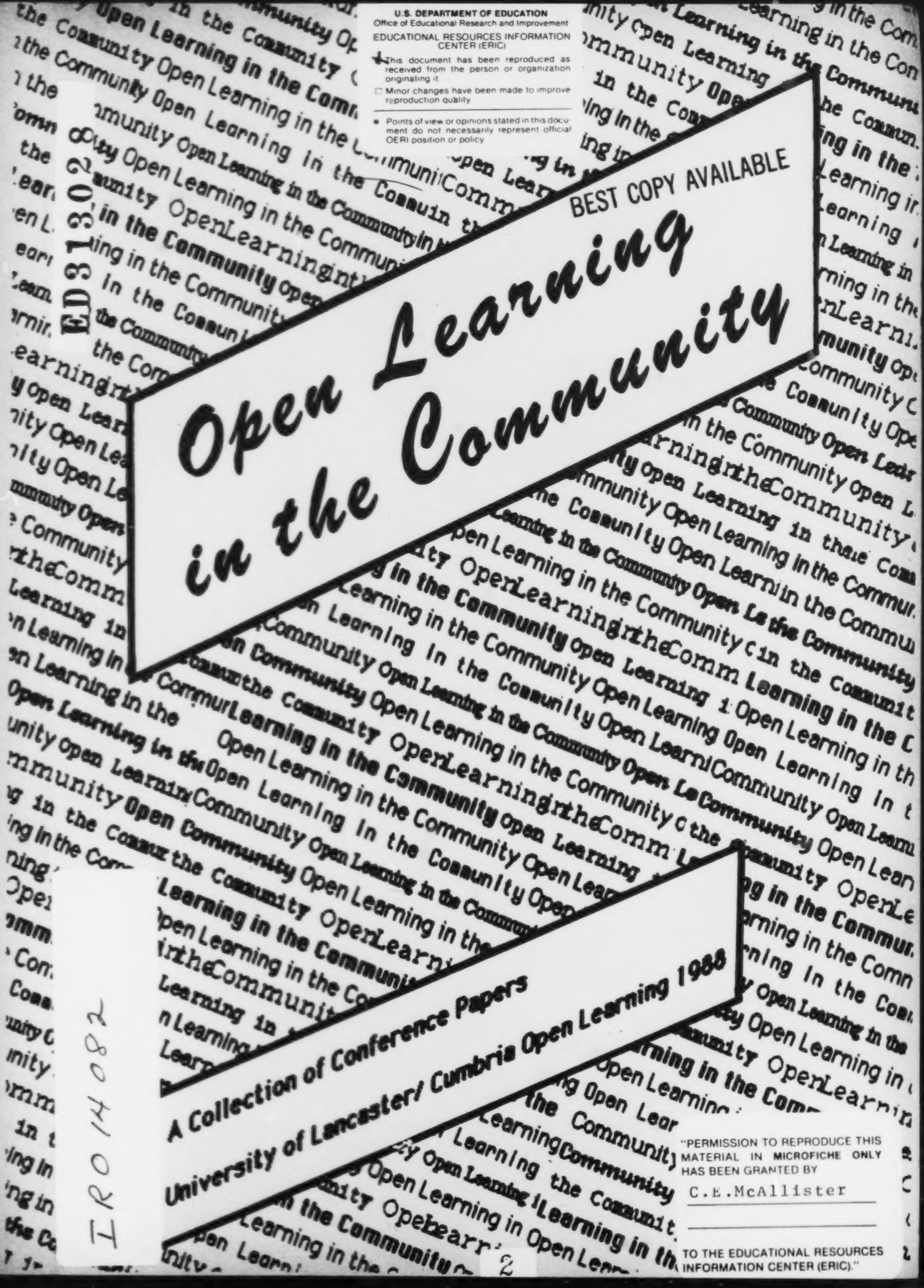

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Open Learning in the Community

A Collection of Conference Papers

University of Lancaster/ Cumbria Open Learning 1988

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Published 1988 by;

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Cumbria Education Department,
5 Portland Square,
CARLISLE
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Price £10.00 including postage and packing

INTRODUCTION

The Conference Open Learning in the Community took place in the University of Lancaster in March 1988 as the result of a happy collaboration between the University's Centre for Management Learning (which had acquired a significant reputation for research and training in open and distance learning in management education), Cumbria Open Learning (a part of the Education Department of a rural County Council which had recognised the potential of open learning for its scattered population) and the University's Extra-Mural Studies Office (which had combined a volume of research into community education with the development for members of the public of experimental schemes of access to the University).

The decision to hold the Conference came from the view, echoed by many practitioners, that open learning in the United Kingdom had, during the 1980's, become particularly dominated by the large-scale needs of industry and commerce, by the dictates (often ill-formulated) of official policy and by the lure of big money - short-term, but multi- thousand pound, external financial support. How did the open learning developments of the 1980's relate to the smaller-scale, but wider-spread, world of adult, continuing and community education? To what extent had individuals, ordinary adults, benefited from open learning? Was there successful experience of delivering open learning to disadvantaged people - unemployed, from ethnic minorities, disabled, living in isolated rural communities for example? Had open learning reached out, from the institution (the college, company or profession) into the community?

Of course, teachers and educators are notoriously bad at putting into practise what they preach. Conferences organised by educators often breach the first principles of the facilitation of learning: they consist of individuals lecturing formally to passive audiences. The organisers of this Conference were much concerned that it should not happen on this occasion, particularly as one notion of open learning required flexibility of learning strategies and contexts and learner autonomy. Moreover, this Conference was relatively successful in attracting a wide range of participants: from further education, industry and commerce, public authorities, adult and community education, higher education, training boards, research institutions and elsewhere. Participants included teachers, employers, administrators and facilitators, mainly from this country but some from abroad. It was evident that participants should have as much opportunity to interact as possible; the real learning would be from each other. The organisation of the Conference allowed for a backbone of plenary sessions with keynote addresses. However, much more conference time was spent in a choice of small group settings, many of which were begun by a formal input but most of which were marked by lively discussion and exchange of information and ideas drawn from the varied experience of participants. Contributors to the Conference were encouraged to submit the papers which they delivered or summarised in their session, or papers based on their session, for publication in these Proceedings. Those which were submitted are printed in what follows.

It was apparent throughout the Conference that the terms 'open learning' and 'community' were highly ambiguous or, to put it in a more constructive way, were susceptible of so many definitions and shades of meaning that they could stimulate discussion and debate at different levels and from a range of starting points. For, there was relatively little 'High-Tech' at the Conference, and not a great deal of reference to it in the papers and sessions. In fact, participants were much more concerned (as several put it) to talk about the 'why' and the 'what' of open learning rather than the 'how'. Techniques and systems, pricing and packages, were kept in the background. Rather, there was talk of what open learning is or can be, and why it is or can be important, and why it is or can be deficient. Many of the paper contributors (and several of these are represented in the Proceedings) felt it necessary to begin their presentations by trying to explain what open learning meant to them. It was not cut and dried; it was not only about removing barriers to the time, place and pace of learning; it was more than the Open University, the Open Tech and the Open College. So, as a stimulus, talk of 'open learning' reached deep to question the fundamentals of what educators were about and what learners wanted.

Indeed, there was much reference (not original to this Conference) to the question often posed as a dichotomy - is open learning about new methods of opening up access to traditional forms of education or is it a new conception, a new philosophy of learning which re-defines the relationship between learner, teacher and knowledge and begins with the centrality of notions of learner autonomy and learner control. In the real world of money, machinery and materials such a question brings along with it the question of who is the client, who is the beneficiary of open learning? Is it, should it be, the individual learner or the organisation which pays and provides?

Such thoughts move quickly into the realms of moral philosophy. It was interesting, in fact, how consideration of the other part of the Conference title - 'community' - took participants in the same direction. Ideas of 'community' as a location, a particular group of people in a location, were taken as only one aspect. 'Community' has a strong value loading. It can be taken to involve caring, sharing, equality, being together, a collective consciousness, the common good. A sense of 'community' can be developed; it can be the end of an educative process. Education is never value-free; the generation of a society in which communal values predominate might be taken, some Conferees thought, as the context within which all open learning should be constructed. And some added to it an even more subtle thought. The notion of "community", an equal, sharing community of learner and teacher is just what open learning is about, they said. Thus the process and the potential product become one. Learner control and community empowerment belong to the same realm of meaning.

At a more practical level, participants brought to the Conference a number of notions of community which are reflected in these Proceedings - for example: the work community, the professional community, the community of interests, the community as a group defined by geography. Issues of access to, and the delivery of, learning were explored in a variety of communities and contexts - in the Third World, in a Health Authority, in adult basic education, in a university, etc. Such variety offered fertile ground for the exploration of similar ideas and issues in dis-similar settings and for the creation of new conceptions and understandinags.

It became clear to Conference participants that the verb should take priority over the adjective; the task was 'to open' learning rather than to develop 'open learning'. It was evident that this task was something very different in Africa on the one hand, and in rural Shropshire on the other; and in adult basic education on the one hand and in universities on the other. Empowerment of individuals, and access to learniang opportunities, might be the goals in each setting - but they meant something different in each instance. Some participants, indeed, advocated the abolition of the term 'open learning' as inadequate. Empowerment of individuals required 'flexible' or 'interactive' rather than merely 'open learning'. Could something be too 'open'? Was something that was 'open' sometimes 'empty', 'neutral', 'value- free'?

Those, of course, are 'open' questions - to which the Conference Proceedings which follow offer some answers.

In the production of this publication we thank Edd Brown for technical help with the software; Lucilla Laval for checking the proofs; Maureen Robinson for compiling the text on Ventura and Barbara Johnston for handling the distribution.

For the technically minded, this volume was prepared for publication at Cumbria College of Art and Design by feeding the typed contributions from paper into Wordstar disk files through a Canon IX-12 scanner running Read Right optical character recognition software. After checking, the files were then edited using Ventura Pulisher software running on a Tandon hard disk PC outputting through a laserprinter.

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September 1988

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HOW OPEN IS OPEN LEARNING?

Hilary Temple

1. Scope

Rightly or wrongly, when you are asked to speak at a conference entitled 'Open learning in the Community' you are bound to wonder what this community is that we are meant to be considering OL for. And, indeed, why it, whatever it is, needs a special conference. Most definitions of 'community' that I've ever encountered tend to limit it rather than making it the all embracing term it should be; this is as frustrating as hearing OL defined in terms of 'package plus tutorial support'. So I'm assuming that I have carte blanche, being on first, to extend the definition of 'community' to equal 'everybody', but that when you come to look at particular problems of access, and so forth, you may want to focus on community as 'people who haven't got the backing of an organisation to help them get their OL'.

2. Background

So how open has OL been up to now? Surely the answer ought to be 'very' - but is it? We've had a fair old history in this country, after all, certainly in distance if not strictly open learning - The first hand-copied Pitman's packages date back to the last century (soon that will be the last century but one !). The Open University continues to impress both at home and abroad, with the academic quality of its provision, and with the design quality of its materials, both text-based and broadcast. Its image as far as 'the community' goes, though - that is, Jo in the street -is still, isn't it, of undergraduate courses; to those slightly closer to it - of slow response to expressed need as the result of bureaucratic procedures and of the quality control process; and of a clientele which is predominantly middle class. And this is despite the excellent track-record which the Open Business School has in offering industrially-relevant courses, and the Community Education side has in delivering materials such as The Pre-School Child which have been used with considerable success with parents at my own children's community primary school in Coventry.

You can think of a number of other organisations able to claim a not dissimilar level of success in their own sphere. I think, for instance of the National Extension College, which this year reaches its Silver Jubilee - if that doesn't sound too royal- family - or its 25th birthday if you think of it as a maturing, notionally adult, individual. I haven't asked Ros Morpeth for a breakdown of its learners, whether as classified by the Registrar-General or by employment sector, but I suspect that the bulk of the clientele is still, for want of a better word, education-biased; young/middle-aged, middle-class or aspirant middle class, wanting to return to learning. People who left the formal system at the earliest possible date and now want to bring their brains back to life and/or gain qualifications for access to HE, with support from a General Studies or similar department in the local FE college. Nothing wrong with that, and I should think that their GCSE market has potential for considerable expansion among anxious parents who are suspicious of this unfamiliar syllabus and the bad press it is getting. Again, however, it is a market restricted to the 'education-conscious ' - those who are going to make the system work for them no matter what.

More recently we have had the opening up of learning via The Open College, broadcasting into everyone's home and thereby getting, in theory at any rate, to that passive market which will not leap at OU or NEC. Simultaneously it is trying to capture tne attention and the upfront cash backing of companies, and you may feel it is beyond the capacity of a single, relatively new organisation to do this. There is also the Open College of the Arts , the baby of the man I am bound to think of as The Other Lord Young - wisely , I think, being quietly piloted in a small number of areas before going full-scale - and most recently of all, Open School. So things called 'Open' are going on practically wherever you look. It makes it even more interesting, therefore, that despite this proliferation each of these initiatives in its own way is going to have to break through barriers of lack of understanding and lack of interest before it can fulfil its market potential. At one time I think we would as a group just wearily have attributed this apathy to our national temperament and gone away and got on with our lives. But although apathy is still rampant, I think there is a crack in it, and I think this crack has been brought about by the stress-agency of Open Tech.

3. Open Tech

The reason why I attribute this achievement to Open Tech is not because I headed an Open Tech project and used to work for MSC. If anything, this should have put me off. People's judgment of the success of Open Tech vary quite wildly - indeed it seems to inspire some people to talk quite wildly ! Rational evaluation has not been helped by the fact that there has not yet been any published study of the whole programne, although the Tavistock Institute has done a massive amount of work on it and this should eventually emerge. The one thing that Open Tech did which distinguished it from previous open learning efforts was that it aimed itself directly at industry. Of course, we all know that one of its subsidiary objectives was to put the fear of God into the FE sector. But the image that came over was of a programme which missed out the snobby elitist education middle-man , even though substantial amounts of the programme were delivered by FE and HE institutions.

The slogan of Open Tech was 'Time, Pace, Place' and this, I think, has unnecessarily focussed attention on only a couple of aspects of what was important about its approach to open learning. If you recall, the target audience was meant to be adults in employment, and not just that but quite specifically technicians, supervisors and lower levels of management. Naturally a good many of the efforts of those in the programme were aimed at these groups, but one of the really interesting achievements of the programme as far as I am concerned was that it immediately addressed itself by means of various ploys to customers quite outwith that primary group , such as the adult unemployed, YTS, craft operatives and to all sorts of other updating and reskilling activities. If you think about it, this is a very good way of getting value for money out of a programme: you get the cash from ministers by being quite specific about what you will achieve and who with, and immediately move the goal-posts to give yourself a wider playing area.

MSC saw the major barriers to industrial regeneration and the provision of responsive industrial training as being (a) the release of staff and (b) the perceived reluctance of FE colleges to provide training at times when industry wanted it, such as during July and August or on Saturdays. It was, however, sold to the government as a way of getting cheap training , and although there are some picturesque examples of OL as a form of cost- cutting, this particular angle has presented the subsequent OL programme with some problems. It is argued that since the effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness, has been demonstrated, industry will now take up OL developments on a large scale without very much being required in the way of incentives. It's very much a case of 'damned if you do and damned if you don't', because if Open Tech has been shown to be a failure there would have been no point in pumping more money into it, and if it wasn't a failure then market forces would prevail to continue it.

4. The Need for OL

This deficit model approach to OTP was quite important to get to grips with. The first point, about release of staff is a key one, and appears to be well substantiated. Employees claim that it is a far more important factor than cost of training, and certainly my own observations have shown that however constrained a company's budget is for training, management are quite happy to lash out large sums for training offered by organisations which they regard as authoritative and prestigious, without in the least evaluating the results in any serious or formative way. In this respect, incidentally, it is absolutely clear that FE does itself no service by offering low-cost training, however good it is. Standards of presentation, accommodation and marketing, and levels of fee, must compete closely with the private sector organisations if FE is to become viable. So companies, quite startlingly understaffed with undertrained staff in key areas, are not going to be happy to release them for training.

The second point, about the responsiveness of FE, like most central governnent criticisms of education, has irritatingly just enough truth in it to hold good. Let me put it positively. You and I know that not every lecturer in FE lives up to their job- title and delivers a well-worn lecture for each of their teaching sessions, walking out after 55 minutes to avoid questions. You and I know that colleges have been operating ECY for years, and that the 48-week year pattern has been welcomed by some , if only to save them having to take their holidays in the most expensive months of July and August. You and I know that students with learning and other difficulties get help on an individual basis from course-tutors and others which can well take these people over their notional 30-hour week every week of the year. And you and I know that classes have long been held on company premises to save a group from having to travel to a college. Equally, you may have had the same experience as I had when I approached some of those companies back in 1984 (the ones who were dying for training but couldn't squeeze any out of inefficient old colleges) with the offer of this new product called Open Tech. The response was not 'Open Tech , what's that?' but more like 'Training, what's that? And who's going to pay me to do it? Anyway, we don't need it, they all finished their apprenticeships ages ago. '

But although there are examples of good practice, there was, as I said , enough of the flaccid, apathetic and self-satisfied in the service offered by FE to give an excellent key for all that mud to stick to. NAFE, whatever its demerits, has at least brought colleges into a mode of costing, evaluating and changing provision which is universally acknowledged to be healthy and beneficial. It will be interesting to see if EHE does the same for HE, and of course how long that carrot remains a carrot.

5. Limitations of OTP

In focussing on Time, Place, Pace, Open Tech probably overemphasised the WHEN and WHERE of learning. These were important, I 'm not saying they weren't. The last - pace - is critical because of the knock-on effects into the examination system, which would have been rendered totally useless, and indeed been bypassed, if it had not started to respond to the needs of self-paced learning. WHEN and WHERE are in a sense the easiest barriers to remove, if we continue to think in those terms, because they are mainly mechanical. The veriest twit of a Principal or HOD can negotiate flexibility on WHEN and WHERE even with the hard men on their NATFHE Branch executive.

6. What else besides Time, Place, Pace?

Much more interesting are the WHAT, HOW, WHO and most difficult, WHY of learning. What have OL developments done for these? For a start, they are plainly not watertight compartments. In practise they overlap and illuminate each other, since WHAT will be affected by HOW, and both will be influenced by WHO. I don't need to labour this point. We could obviously spend a whole day on focussing on just one of these elements, and we haven't got that kind of time. But as I said earlier you will have the opportunity in your groups to decide if WHO is the main focus of this event. So let me run through those key words very briefly and see how far we could move a notional indicator for each of them along the open/closed continuum towards the open end as a result of recent endeavours in OL.

7. What

WHAT seems to me to have opened up a good bit. OL has certainly moved out of the 'GCE O and A levels with a bit of accountancy and the odd external London degree' era. Not that coverage is anything other than fragmentary yet, and it will be a long time before customers have any kind of real choice in one topic area, but a lot is going on despite that traditional disadvantage of OL - the upfront cost.

When we look at WHAT we immediately run up against the compartmentalisation problem, because HOW is critical to WHAT. You may feel that I, with a recent history of running an Open Learning Branch that incorporated, very satisfactorily and rationally, we felt, a Training Technology section, am bound to take this line, but even without that experience I think I would still have believed as I do now that technology-assisted learning blows the whole subject of WHAT wide open. In particular it makes accessible in quite unprecedented ways:

(a) the WHAT that needs expensive equipment (CAD/CAM) or dangerous equipment (welding).

(b) the WHAT that needs a lot of repetition and practise (languages including the language of mathematics).

(c) behavioural WHAT, traditionally regarded as a no-go area for OL because 'you can't learn management/communications/whatever from a book.' Open College is interestingly using its broadcast capability to break into this area for sales/marketing and women returners - you may have seen either the programmes or the packages. It is now left with the even more interesting problem of how you assess achievement and accredit it. And interactive video, the darling of those who wish to attack the technological solution looking for a problem, enables you to understand, analyse and respond in quite sophisticated ways to behavioural problems, and is underestimated only because it is in the primitive state that CAL was in when it had to be programmed line-by-line in BASIC.

8. How

There is more to how than machinery, though. The most exciting element of how isn't the extra-ordinary - as CBT still is for most of us - but the capacity of the ordinary to contribute to the learning process. The work place and the home can be a learning environment for adults in the same way that they are for children. it's just that up to now we have behaved like the worst kind of dickensian baby farmers, dosing adults with the sedative of repetitive work, and tying them into cots of classrooms, machine shops and offices during daylight hours. the how is not just learning packages, though these are an important starting-point because they are finite, tangible, measurable and visible: and thus they reassure those who think the whole thing about ol is a trifle wishy-washy. nothing that has happened in OL so far suggests that adults will have any great difficulty in absorbing their learning from a resource-full environment, in the same way as we learnt to speak as babies. Particularly if they haven't been through a process in the meantime that puts them off learning for life because it impresses them with the fact that they are stupid and that all the knowledge and skills they require are held elsewhere by someone who refuses to give them the key. We can if we want see this development as a threat, because if HOW extends in the way I suggest, then the gurus and experts may be less sought-after.

9. Who

As to who, you may agree with my rather saddened view that the kinds of people who have been affected by OL so far are very little different from those who have always benefited from what is going. Yes, some women have had access to new technology training through, for instance, MSC programmes. And what have they been doing? Word-processing, with perhaps just a tiny touch of spreadsheets and databases. Very liberating. Yes, some managers have undergone some all-too-rare training by means of henley or ou packages: a bit of fire-fighting, this, and it almost certainly wasn't a pre-requisite to their getting their job. You could argue, though, that it is some kind of advance to have any training at all in an area traditionally regarded as caught not taught. Progress for first-line managers has been greater in numerical terms, as there have been a number of suitable packages developed for supervisors. There again, there may be some legitimate concern about the extent to which open learning has simply manipulated a very well-motivated and hard- working group of people into studying far more in their own time than would have been necessary in the conventional mode.

Satisfying though it is when you come across an adult making the grade through OL (despite setbacks which would have put off conveyor- belt learners like me for life,) the most hope-bearing WHOs are youngsters. I find it remarkably encouraging that OL, once considered suitable only for 'mature' learners, whoever they may be, has now tentatively been tried in YTS - not up till now terribly famous for breaking any stereotypes - and most importantly in TVEI. Supported self-study is the single most important development in secondary education, because it exists irrespective of core curricula and other niceties and yet influences most effectively just what is taught, how it is learned and relationships between teachers and learners. If MSC were only about output-type results like 'more learning per £' and not about meeting other political imperatives it would undoubtedly focus its whole resource upon developing a generation of learners who know how they learn, who know what they want to learn and who know what to do about it. The demand this would create' higher up' the system would almost certainly cause it to crack - though the cracking might be like that of an eggshell or plaster-cast and lead to a growing that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

10. Why

I said WHY was the most difficult and so it is in some respects, but in a way it's the easiest. The WHY revealed by OL so far is very good, for those who like me want to make a living out of it as well as for the learners themselves. You will still find companies whose managers say that their employees won't undertake further training unless they can see extra pay, promotion or some other tangible benefit at the end of it. That reponse of learners is so heavily mediated it's impossible to tell how true it is or even if it begins to be true. Certainly as it stands it seems to sum up that element in our culture which makes Britain so remarkably different from the countries with which government- inspired reports tend to compare us, such as the US and Japan. Of course, when you talk to open learners they have often had some specific aim in mind which their recent experience of OL has helped them to fulfil. But this has for a significant number of individuals become subsumed in a broader sense of achievement and a new and wider set of aspirations. 'My mind's come alive again', 'You feel it's not something small you're doing', ' I wouldn't call it fun, but it's been worth the effort ' are characteristic ways of describing the process; and I can't emphasise too strongly that these are not home-bound neurotics , or slow learners, or grateful recipients of some kind of handout, even though I've seen OL meet some of their needs too, but well- organised adults who were perfectly happy with their lives but acknowledge that OL is adding another dimension to their existence and has not only met an unformulated need but created a larger appetite - since another characteristic response is 'What can I do next? '

II. Where are we now?

Once the opening speaker starts talking about another dimension it's plainly time to stop listening if you haven't done so already, lest we end up in the lofty realms of philosophy, conspectuses, overviews and 'Whither learning? ' This hasn't tried to be a keynote address, because I suspect you'll be playing in any number of keys during these two and a half days , and any tonics you identify will probably be in the bar accompanied by a good deal of gin.

If I had to sum up where we've got to in terms of achieving greater openness in learning: we've moved much more slowly than we thought we were going to at the time of the Open Tech Task Group report. I don't think this is necessarily discouraging, though, because it's a movement that had, like all operators wanting to build soundly, to dig down before it started to show above the ground. To put it another way, OL is also progressing slowly because it's trying to do everything - and of course where it's been in receipt of government funding, trying to do everything yesterday. This doesn't make for rationality, but by golly it makes for excitement.

No other education and training initiative is trying to hit everything from schools to HE, industry, professional bodies and NCVQ. This partly accounts for the lack of penetration in any one area. For something that works so well when it gets going it is the victim of a fair amount of apathy. We haven't yet reached a critical mass of materials in particular which enable OL to be a viable choice in any given learning situation. We're simply not geared up yet. But large companies have a powerful influencing role to play here. Bribed in early days of OTP with free samples of materials, many of them, even those who didn't get the freebies , are going into OL after a long silence. Not hesitantly but as the result of a long process of weighing up the benefits and disadvantages. A number of them see OL as the only conceivable way in which they can get volume training in advance of need at an even quality throughout the country. Often they are fitting it into a programme of total quality control, where OL sits very well if you think about it. Not only is it visible , it's even got a quality code by which its customers can judge OL products and services.

There are now a fair few initiatives in OL, none of which is large enough or broad enough in scope to subsume the others. The result is richness and variety, yes, but also a degree of sectarianism which when it surfaces is probably unattractive to the end-user. There will therefore be a demand for disinterested brokerage as well as for professional marketing of products and services by their originators. If there can at the same time be some coming together by two or more of the existing organisations this may help to create a less confused image for customers, though we should note that they've put up with the ramifications of FE/HE for long enough.

Luddism has no place in education or training, which should be constantly on the lookout for ways of making the technology serve educational ends. A lot of the arguments against the use of new methods are, when you look at them closely, just another way of saying 'Me! Me! Look at beautiful me, not at that screen that claims to know as much as I do.' Human beings will always be able to do different and better things compared with computers (even artificial intelligence and expert systems) and they can certainly do better than tape-recorders. So why do we persist in sticking to doing those things that we can't do better?

Perhaps the most important factor which can contribute to the long-term success of the open learning approach is to stop seeing it as a separate activity from all others. It was noticeable that in NEC, OU and Open Tech, the most successful bits were those which didn't try to have a separate existence but grafted themselves on to their host. Because the principles on which open learning is based are educationally sound, it follows that if you apply them to conventional provision you raise the quality without any overt or dramatic policy shift.

I hope this is a very good and useful conference, despite the ancient curse of 'May you live in interesting times'. You will want to address some of the practicalities, like how an unfunded individual gets help to buy some of these expensive open learning goodies on the market. You will want to hear about examples of good practice in specific areas, and in such a way that you can actually do something with them. You will want to exchange gossip about local and national developments. But most of all I hope you will be wanting to take away something which will enable you to move OL another stage forward, wherever you are working.

Whatever form that activity takes, I hope this conference will move us all a little way along the road away from seeing open learning as merely about removing barriers. Removing barriers is important because there are still too many in the path of self- fulfilment for many people. But if we go on regarding OL as only about this, we shall fall into the trap of thinking only in terms of freedom from, not freedom to do. We want, don't we, for the whole community, not just freedom from artificial constraints on learning, but freedom to do all the things that OL is so well placed to help people do.

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OPEN LEARNING AND COMMUNITY

Ian Cunningham

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Style of Writing

I have written this piece mainly in the form of a series of assertions. I have provided some supporting comments and analysis in places, but largely I have made statements of philosophy and principles. I do not claim these are truths; they are rather fundamental values and beliefs which operate 'as if' they were truths. They are a basis for living; they assume a sceptical epistomology and a humanistic, holistic ontology.

2. Content

I have commented firstly on the context for open learning and the idea of community. I have then indicated an idealised, dichotomised typology which counterposes two opposing educational approaches. Finally I have provided some concrete examples of my preferred approach to learning.

3. Open Learning

In all of what follows I have assumed in the reader an interest in open learning and therefore I have not discussed this approach to learning in any detail. I have also chosen to interpret all organised learning activity as 'educational' (hence also avoiding convoluted references to 'education and training').

B. CONTEXT

1. National Context

Educational activity in Britain takes place within a socio-politico-economic context. Currently one outcropping of this context is the use of the concept of 'enterprise'. Enterprising can have a benevolent meaning. It can mean autonomous, self- reliant, proactivity which is not selfish or self centred. Or it can have a pejorative connotation of uncaring, materialistic individualism which denies concern for others. By my language I have indicated what I favour

Unfortunately for those whose interest is solely in wealth creation, our individualistic model does not stand up well to economic comparison with other countries, whether it is with the social democratic collectivism of Sweden or the Eastern style collectivism of Japan or South Korea.

It is not that polarising individualism and collectivism is necessarily the best analytical framework. But it does focus our minds on a context not only of poor economic performance but also of

- growing divorce rates

- child abuse

- rape and other violent crimes

- football hooliganism

- drug addiction and alcoholism - and so on.

I recognise that this is only one side of our national scene, but it is the side that is linked inexorably to a sense of disconnectedness amongst people. If I feel disconnected from others I have no problems of conscience about being violent towards others, robbing them, cheating them and so on. If, however, I feel connected to others and to the world around me, I feel as if I am doing harm to myself if I harm others. A supposed Christian society has lost the ideal of love thy neighbour as thyself.

2. Community

The ideals of community can have a hard time in the context I have indicated. However, I do see possibilities for developing community (in its broadest sense) if educational activity can assist people to re-connect. So my starting point in defining community is the idea and ideal of connectedness. The notion is of a community of people connected to each other - not through a dogmatic unitary ideology but through respect for difference; an awareness of others supporting an un-mushy caring. An old chiasm is the need to switch from thinking together and feeling separately to feeling together and thinking separately.

COMMUNITY

- Connection
- Wisdom
- Holism
- Values/Beliefs/Philosophy
- Spiritual Sense
- Honesty/Integrity

Other ideals of community include the following:

a. WISDOM - knowledge of the 'Trivial Pursuits' or 'Mastermind' variety is not seen as enough. Wisdom requires the integration of knowledge of the world ' out there ' with self knowledge; it requires theory and practice to be in harmony.

b. HOLISM - this takes further the notion of connection. The ideal is to recognise the necessary bonds between us and our world in a way which acknowledges the artificiality of distinctions. We also need to connect in ourselves who we are, with what we do, with how we feel, with what we value, with how we think, with what we think about.

c. SPIRITUALITY AND VALUES. This is another extension of the holism ideal. We need to be able to address questions of 'why' - like 'why are we here? ', 'why do we value what we value? '.

C. LEARNING AND EDUCATION

1. Open Learning

Open learning should support the sense of community I have outlined. If open learning is purely cognitive or purely skills based it cannot do this. Openness in learning must include openness to others and their needs; openness to ones self; openness to difference (to other people's perspectives); openness to questioning. For the teacher/tutor/trainer it requires being open to what learners want: this implies that fixed curricula and syllabuses are unacceptable .

Think together Feel Separately

v

Feel together Think separately

2. Two Types of Open Learning

For the sake of analysis I shall postulate two kinds of open learning.

a. DISTANCING LEARNING

This is not necessarily the same as 'distanced learning'. I am not referring here to technology and techniques. I am referring to matters of principle. Distancing learning is mechanised and standardised. It assumes homogeneity in learners - usually the assumption of an audience of young, white, able-bodied, heterosexual, middle class (or aspiring middle class) males. It is authoritarian in its control over what it is permitted to learn. Often an assessment process is used to solidify this control .

Narrowly instrumental, behaviourist assumptions are carefully hidden in the background, and these support an individualistic, isolationist climate which can disable people so that at its extreme they are unable to work in social settings. The manic, obsessive computer hacker is an example of this.

b. CONNECTING LEARNING

Whilst autonomy is valued here, the ideals of community are the backcloth to this autonomy. The trainer/teacher/tutor starts with learners and who they are. It is no more than doing what a good mother does when she has to learn from her baby before she can do any teaching. The baby communicates its needs and mother responds. But such a response is not just a mirroring of the baby: it is designed to progress the baby' s learning. And ideally the teaching is designed to assist the child to develop autonomy.

This brings us full circle back to enterprise. An enterprise culture based on these assumptions would provide 'connected autonomy' for the people making up such a culture. It would not deny the value of self reliance; of standing on one's own feet and not using others as crutches. But it would not require self- centred money-grubbing as a pattern of behaviour.

D. CONNECTING LEARNING IN PRACTICE

1. Historical Perspectives

Examples in history of people attempting this mode of learning are not hard to find: we can go back as far as Lao Tsu in ancient China or Socrates in ancient Greece. Coming up to date, the twentieth century has thrown up theorists and practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic. A favourite of mine is A.S. Neill . The reasons for this are that the success of Summerhill as a school has been well documented (not just by Neill), and that my own visits to Summerhill some time after Neill 's death gave me direct experience of it as a living, working example of an open learning community.

2. Personal Experience

I have tried to develop self managed learning programmes as a way of meeting the ideals I have postulated. Like other practitioners, I would be foolish to claim these ideals are easily met. However, I do not believe that difficulty of achievement exonerates us from aiming for ideals.

In the Post Graduate Diploma in Management (by Self Managed Learning) at North East London Polytechnic we did set up and successfully run a programme in which participants decided what they would learn, how they would learn, where they would learn and so on. We also engaged in collaborative assessment modes whereby the learner's self assessment was counter-posed with the view of peers and tutors in order to reach consensual judgement for the award of a Diploma (or not). And most of the time these processes worked well.

We also conducted this programme in the context of a learning community which made decisions on matters of collective concern. But it was more than a decision-making forum. The sense of a connected community, when it was at its best, pervaded the whole of our work. People felt part of something important that both linked them and gave them freedom. It enriched people's lives, without ensnaring them in the rigid dogmas associated with guru-led closed communities .

Distancing	**Connecting**
Mechanised	Value autonomy
Standardised	
Avoids Differences	Recognises differences
Disabling	Enabling
Solitary	Community
	Links Being/Doing/Thinking/ Feeling

B. CONCLUSION

I have suggested some ideals and criticised what I perceive as the closedness of most so-called open learning. To pretend to learners that technology-driven, packaged learning is necessarily open is a terrible danger in much current practice. However, if the technology is genuinely reponsive to learner-driven learning, then much of what is currently being done could be highly beneficial. But the technology also needs to accommodate the collective human dimension if we are not to enhance disconnectedness .

ARE WE REALLY OPEN - WITH OUR LEARNERS AND OURSELVES?

(The Practical implications of various degrees of learner autonomy on the provision and management of open learning systems, and vice versa.)

W J K Davies

This article starts from the observation that 'Open Learning' or the set of activities which currently get labelled with that name, has not been developing nearly as fast over the last few years as its proponents predicted - and that despite massive, if somewhat erratic, official support. The OU worked. Why didn't its 'sub-OU level' derivatives such as flexistudy, the Open Tech and now the Open College - confidently predicting 50,000+ in its first year and fighting to reach 3,000 after 6 months? None of them, certainly in their formative periods, managed to break through on a large scale to the market they all claimed was there.

Now there may be good reasons for the slow growth of flexistudy which was breaking new ground on a shoestring and even for the massively funded Open Tech which was trying to do many things at once and to sell them into British industrial training, a notoriously difficult market to inspire...but Open College should have been able to learn from the mistakes of its predecessors and to build on other experience. Yet it deliberately took almost exactly the same route and, surprise, surprise, appears to have encountered exactly the same apathy and resistance. There are, of course, various organisational problems, factors one can cite as to why this happened but in the last analysis they cannot be decisive. One must, therefore, ask whether the fault lies not with the amount of effort put in but with our perception of what we provide, how and to whom? Is 'OL' as currently promoted, in danger of losing its way and becoming fossilised because it is not appropriate to its perceived clients? If so, it is hard to see how it can ever be more than peripheral and expensive...which is a vicious circle from which it is increasingly difficult to escape.

Why is this the case? The writer, from 20 years experience of the genre, suggests that it may well be because we have developed 'OL' from the point of view of the providers...and the learning providers and resource producers have always had major constraints on their actions. Providers - colleges et al - need to adapt to changing student numbers and to find new markets; producers are there to sell 'things' at a profitable margin and quantity rather than to get involved in an expensive service. We have, therefore, both tended to convince (delude?) ourselves that the prospective clientele is appropriate for our desires - that a wide range of 'ordinary' people both want to, and can, undertake self-study with a little help from their friends. The OU is cited to 'show' this is true, but is it? And are they? The take-up does not suggest so, and it may well be we are offering something which not many people perceive as beneficial to them. The almost frenetic attempts of the recent BBC series to show 'inadequate' self studiers coping can easily be read as a counsel of desperation!

Yet it is this perception of the market which has led effectively to the widespread assumption that 'Open Learning' equates with what I would call the I+I+I concept. You sell a package of materials to a student and provide him/her with (some) access to a tutor. All too often, either the cost becomes prohibitive or I+I+I=$^{1}/_{2}$; in other words the total result is less than the sum of its parts. People can, of course, cite all sorts of other provisions which they perceive to be under the umbrella title of 'OL' but still the above model is that most widely perceived by the managers and policy makers. Indeed the Open College has, alas, recently reinforced the view by ducking out of the student support game and trying to live by just selling packages with minimal guaranteed advice.

Now that model is really a hangover from the correspondence colleges who used to make their margins largely from the number of students who dropped out before completing the course, because they found it too difficult. Surely we, however, are not in that business. We are here to provide alternative or additional ways of getting over effective high quality education and training, or so the MSC Quality Control Code would have us believe. This must mean maximising not only the uptake but also the student success rate, which means we need to retain our students and inspire them to bring in more.

So, would anything change if we really did consider what our potential learners' needs were and started from there? Our current imperatives push us into assuming that either the clientele can and should be happy to study largely on its own or that, if not, should be encouraged, exhorted and guided to do so as a matter of course: the BBC programmes cited above and the rash of 'return to learning' guides show how obsessed, almost, we are getting with this approach. Yet are we in reality begging the issue? Are most of our prospective clients in this category and is the approach, in any case, the most effective way of helping many of them? From many years' experience of helping individuals of all ages and abilities, I doubt it. The average person appears to need (or at least to be grateful for, if he gets) a fair amount of help and encouragement to study successfully and that help needs to be continuing and freely available. If this is so then perhaps we should change our basic premises - but, if we do, does the result still get recognised as 'OL' or are we plunging into yet another terminological black hole?

Let us consider the problem. By any definition of 'openness', if we genuinely start from our learners' needs rather than from the expectations we plant via our own perceptions, there are significant implications for both providers and producers.

1. For providers (colleges et al) we need to rethink perceptions of what 'Open Learning' is or is not. The traditional FE/training spectrum of conventional teaching and project work plus some individual self- study ('I+I+I' or what one might call 'traditional OL') is perhaps not really an appropriate model of extended provision. Should we not be thinking more of a division into largely conventional (15:1 or 12:1 class group typically) and non-conventional (any approach which opens up learning opportunities, access and support). This latter category includes to my mind all those disparate schemes which so often get totally fragmented as far as an institution is concerned - short courses, self-study, learning workshops, special links with industry. So often none of these are linked yet their total potential is probably as great as class learning and the two 'sides', properly integrated, give a system with a massive overlap in the middle which is probably more significant than either end: neither conventional class teaching nor 'traditional OL' are in practise particularly open from the student's angle; systems that blend approaches, content choice and flexibility are, so can't we work towards them?

2. For producers the problem is somewhat different - and they are vitally important because, whatever 'OL' is, it depends for flexibility and effectiveness on an extensive use of resource-based techniques and wide-ranging support materials. Hence they may well argue for I+I+I because they perceive it sells more packages and that is what gets them income ... so they try to maximise this, even to the extent of playing down the need for support because the extra cost may inhibit sales, and by making packages non-reusable. This policy did not work with PL and it is dubious at present because, if you don't generate a lasting market, you don't get continuing sales - and I+I+I is not really doing that. So, if we do change our approaches and 'suppress' the urge to sell, sell, sell, how do we ensure producers can continue development and supply without going out of business?

Squaring the Circle

If we accept that such concerns are genuine and that to help a wide clientele we may need to change, then how do we square the circle in such a way that the marketing and cashflow needs of both providers and producers can be satisfied while at the same time we provide a genuinely high quality service at a price that is not probibitive? It is not going to be easy. Not only does any such compromise involve changing perceptions and attitudes but it may mean actively rethinking even the 'Open Learning' structures we have established which in themselves, in fossilising, may obtrude. (cf the idea of flexibility which even our latest initiative, the Open College, is not helping to develop; instead it threatens to get us all increasingly locked into 'traditional distance-based OL').

For both providers and producers, progress depends frankly on the hopes that we can create a very large student volume which I+I+I in isolation has so far conspicuously failed to do. If we could do this, staff could be as economically deployed as in conventional classes and the numbers would ensure that, even if every package bought were used half-a-dozen times, the total sales would increase. The formula $I+{}^{1}/_{2}+S=SS$ (learner + use of a reusable package + support (variable) = success) is one which would be likely to be self-developing. If that expectation were general then producers could profitably think more of producing packages which were both semi-reusable and useful after learning; a cheapish consumable part which could also act as an aide-memoire later (very uncommon now) and a more expensive part that could be used over and over again via an institution (rent or on-site use). The latter could certainly be more expensive to cover its lower volume since the institution or firm would only need to buy once - or at longish intervals - for library use. The cost to the student would need to include no more than a little of this and would thus not be so inhibiting as it is at present.

Yet in order to persuade producers to provide what the students need - and 'producers' here include those organisations producing their own 'home grown' materials - there does need to be evidence of a genuine potential market. It can be argued that this is something of a chicken and egg situation but we do now perhaps have enough eggs, in the form of materials which even if they do not entirely meet our specification can be adapted in the short term. We now need to 'hatch' them - to find ways of using what we have to satisfy - and thus generate - students with the double aim of convincing producers they can continue to develop and providers that there are fruitful ways of providing learning that are not exhorbitant in cash or manpower - and which would benefit everyone by being integral parts of the total system.

So how can we do it? The main point appears to be that we need to accept that, while as a whole the 'non-conventional' parts need to be integrated in a flexible system, there is no single counterpart to the taught class-group; different requirements need varying patterns of resource provision and learning structures, which in the early days may not appear as cost- efficient as 15:1. But then in any case we are talking of the need to attract and provide for a wide variety of students who may appear at varying times and in small numbers in anything from I to 8 or 9. Work in technology-heavy areas, for example CAD or CBT, may depend very much on expensive but high quality packages that demand equipment but require very little in the way of human support - indeed it is in this area that the 'workshop' approach is currently making most progress. Likewise 'roll-on roll-off' requirements - students coming into the same course at different times or students simply wanting short-term help almost at random (eg maths workshops) - demand an organisational structure which can cope with a variety of provision - workshops, 1+1+1, small group seminars...On the other hand literacy and numeracy work, largely because of the need of such students for extensive help, require much more 'on-site' work with human support and much less (if just as carefully structured) materials support. Then there is what is likely to be an increasing demand as numbers fall - small but homogenous groups of 5 or 6 quite willing to work together and keep in step but unable to get conventional teaching because of the numbers game. Here a basic structure of less- frequent-than-normal lectures linked to structured work assignments or self-study packs may enable the work to be done at a comparable cost - but only if the extra cost of the support materials can be kept down for students.

All these approaches are, of course, applicable both to training in the work place and to provision by an educational or training institution. The pattern common to all is flexibility for the student with a reasonably economic use of staff time and material resources. In fact the odd-man-out may well turn out to be '1+1+1'schemes because for effective learning they tend to be expensive to provide. There will always be a proportion of students who want or need this approach and small doses of it may well be an element in all sorts of other schemes. At sub-OU level, however, it may turn out always to be peripheral: what we need to ensure is that it is peripheral to a wide-ranging flexible and 'open' system of provision not just the (small) 'open' element in a monolithic traditional system.

To sum up, a student intending to learn should have a number of choices and those should not be mutually exclusive. In other words, if he does depend mainly on a taught class then his teacher should have the option of integrating other approaches and facilities into the work (eg assignments in a workshop). If he comes in to take a short course then maybe an extension of that would be guided workshop facilities, or some home study, or both ... or even attendance at a module that is being taught conventionally. The combinations and permutations available should be as wide as possible with the aim of producing as much help to the community as possible, at an affordable cost.

Yet so long as we go out to hawk wares that suit our convenience and needs, we are unlikely to get other than a grudging and 'faut-de-mieux' acceptance with a fairly high discouragement rate - and current open learning initiatives show no improvement over traditional methods in this respect. If we set out to find out what our prospective clients want (and need) and then try to satisfy their demands in a flexible manner, we can genuinely start to want (and need) and then try to satisfy their demands in a flexible manner, we can genuinely start to talk about OPEN learning that can be perceived as such by student and provider alike.

CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTIONS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

Don Osborn and Gloria Lee

Economic changes over the last twenty years in Britain and France have heightened the need to seek new approaches to teaching and learning. This period has also seen more interventionist strategies from governments in both countries, particularly in the field of vocational education and training (VET).

As 1992 approaches, similarities and differences in ways in which both countries prepare and enhance the abilities and skills of their workforces become more significant, as opportunities for collaborative ventures increase, and employers operating in both countries recognise the need to look for ways in which to develop cross-cultural training.

This paper examines some of the opportunities which open and distance learning present for rethinking traditional approaches to VET in the two countries and attempts to identify some of the factors that need to be recognised and addressed as a way forward towards a more cross-cultural approach to training.

Definitions of Open and Distance Learning

There are number of differences in approach to concepts of open- ness and distance in the fields of learning in Britain and France which are further illustrated by the distinction made in Britain, although not necessarily in France, between teaching and learning.

Coffey (1977) defines open-ness in the educational context as closely associated with the removal of administrative and educational constraints which leads to freedom from constraints on the learning process. It is generally accepted that administrative constraints relate to attendance in a specific place and at a specific time, over a given period. Educational constraints, on the other hand, restrict teaching to a particular sequence, with pre-defined learning objectives and strategy, together with minimum standards of entry.

Distance education, in contrast, is concerned with freedom from the administrative constraints of time and place but not necessarily from educational constraints. Thus, as Binsted argues open-ness and distance become two separate elements of a programme which may 'either be open or distance or neither or both' (Binsted 1985:11). Keegan (1986) also points to a considerable overlap in the use of open and distance concepts in education, with many programmes combining the two elements.

Teaching is concerned with imparting information or skill to a person or persons about a subject. In as much as the teacher is the expert, the organising and sequencing of what is to be taught rests with the imparter of this knowledge. Thus, since the information to be acquired by the learner is disseminated by the teacher, this means that the latter traditionally plays a central role in setting the parameters of the learning experience, In the field of open and distance learning however, the central role of the teacher becomes diffused in various ways.

Boot and Hodgson (1987) in looking at the meaning and experience of open learning, juxtapose a dissemination orientation, where the role of the teacher is that of the guardian of knowledge, which is disseminated directly or through course media and materials, with one in which knowledge is acquired developmentally. Here individuals go beyond acquiring stored knowledge towards the development of the whole person, through a capacity to make sense of the world around them. The authors argue that the distinction between a dissemination and development approach can be seen as two basic orientations to open learning.

In the same volume, Snell, Hodgson and Mann (1987), exploring the place of distance teaching in relation to open learning, argue that whilst distance teaching has increased access to traditional dissemination oriented education, it has not been used to challenge this orientation. Thus distance teaching serves as a form of dissemination oriented open learning.

Notwithstanding this general trend, there is some indication of a recognition of the need for developmental approaches in distance teaching, which can be seen for instance in the field of management education, where some attempts are being made to incorporate developmental aspects into the learning experience (Lee 1987).

Anglo-French Comparisons

In the Anglo-French context, it is necessary to recognise certain differences in tradition and approaches to learning which can be masked in translation. Taking four key words crucial to the field of open and distance learning, that of:

education and training; learning and teaching

training and education generally both fall under the French concept of:

la formation

whereas learning is generally translated by:

l'enseignement

coming from the verb enseigner which means to teach.

Distance learning is translated into what amounts to the equivalent of distance teaching in French through the term

l'enseignement à distance

It can be argued then that the concept of distance learning in the British context is more concerned with the learning process and is therefore closer to a developmental activity compared with the instructional concept of teaching implied by the French "enseignement". Even when talking about the learner, only a neologism in French, that of "l'apprenant" can come anywhere near close to the English concept of the learner.

Further indications of a difference in orientation in this area is illustrated through the way in which the French use the verb

apprendre - to learn

when they are actually talking about

enseigner - to teach.

When considering the implications of the use of language for the aims and intentions of open and distance learning, one of the first barriers to be overcome when discussing "l'enseignement à distance" in France is that it should translate the idea of distance learning, rather than distance teaching. For instance Jean-Paul Desbruères struck a compromise with his translation of open learning in his paper "L'Enseignement à Distance en France" by calling it "l'open learning" (SATURNOVA 1987).

Highlighting such difficulties in translation can help to clarify some of the different approaches in England and France to open and distance learning in the fields of VET. To date initiatives concerning distance and open learning in France have centred upon the idea of distance, and not the concept of an open educational experience.

Until very recently in France, distance learning leading to vocationally relevant qualifications has remained the domain of the correspondence course. Many such courses are open in the administrative sense, but heavily instructional in orientation and do not provide any opportunity for developmental learning.

Whilst in both countries there has been a tradition of using correspondence courses as a means of acquiring vocationally relevant qualifications, in recent years in Britain the concern to promote continuing education has lead to many initiatives which have rethought approaches to distance learning. New approaches, including the use of multi-media, have been pioneered in particular by the Open University and more recently supported through such initiatives as PICKUP, the MSC Open Tech Programme, employer based open learning centres and now the Open College. In contrast, in France the traditional instructional mode of learning remains at the core of correspondence-type distance learning programmes.

In-house training does not generally have the educational constraints associated with accreditation and, perhaps for this reason, there has been a growing interest shown in open learning by personnel trainers in Britain. France has only just begun to expand distance learning into fields other than that of the correspondence course and this may well be connected to a much more entrenched adherence to traditional instructor lead training methods in organisations, outside certain highly specialised fields in high tech industries.

The Role of Government in VET

There are clear differences in the role of government in fostering VET in France and Britain, which provide contrasting contexts in which open and distance learning initiatives have developed in the two countries.

In France, as in England, unemployment in the 1970s was the catalyst for greater involvement by government in training initiatives. In 1971, a law was introduced making it compulsory for all companies over a certain size to reserve a minimum sum of 1.1% of their total salary expense for training. In fact, only about 0.8% goes over to training since other compulsory payments must be made within the 1.1%.

One of the biggest problems was that, for a long time, the imposed minimum of 1.1% was, for many employers, thought of as being close to a tax, hence a social expense. Nevertheless, there are indications that French companies are increasingly ready to invest in training. For instance, companies of over IO members (i.e. those who must by law take part in the "taxe d'apprentissage" scheme) gave over on average 2.34% of their salary mass for this purpose in 1986, compared to 2.24% in 1985.

The "taxe d'apprentissage" on the other hand goes back to a law dating from 1925. Any company of ten or more salaried employees is made to pay 0.5% of its total salary expense for the benefit of technical and professional training. This differs from the 1.1% in the sense that it is in fact a tax. Instead of being paid to the State Treasury, it is given over to a certain number of agreed centres of collection, from where it is distributed to agreed training centres. Alternatively it can be paid directly to the training establishment of the company's choice.

For many years, this 0.5% was considered as yet another tax burden. However, recent changes in law and attitudes, particularly in the lending sector, have led to a change in the way the "taxe d'apprentissage" is considered by employers. In 1971, the title of this tax was changed to the "participation of employers to the financing of technical and professional training". Training is now gaining in the list of priorities. In 1983, 250 million francs of State funding was made available for the development of new training techniques. At the same time, a scheme known as the "credit-impot formation" was conceived which allows a company which increases its spending on training to benefit from a tax credit of 25% of the increase.

In Britain there is no equivalent legislation requiring organisations to invest a minimum sum in training and British employers are generally much less ready than those in other industrial competitor countries to recognise the need to invest in training. However, since the 1960s, the traditional assumption that training is wholly at the employer's discretion has been challenged. The introduction of the Industry Training Board during the 1960's and the use of grants and levies has heralded an era of greater concern by government for the need to encourage vocational education and training.

In France, the need to retrain a sizeable portion of the rapidly- increasing numbers of jobless led, in the 1970s, to the opening of provision within academic institutions for training programmes to satisfy this need under the overall scheme of "la formation continue". For practically the first time, training was being carried out by what were fundamentally educational establishments.

As in France, the greatest boost to national investment in VET in Britain has arisen out of concern over growing levels of unemployment. In Britain the creation of the Manpower Services Commission in 1973 was initially in response to the increase in youth unemployment but has since become a major source of funding for targeted forms of adult training, including open and distance learning.

The growing availability in Britain of open and distance learning packages, which can be bought in by employers provides an important resource for all organisations. Additionally, they can provide a particularly important incentive to smaller companies, who may be aware of the need for training, but are unable to fund a training department or develop their own training materials. A recent MSC survey, however, indicates that not all small firms recognise the relevance of such resources for their needs (MSC 1987).

Whilst the smaller company in France spends little over the legal minimum on vocational education and training, it is not uncommon among the very large companies to find that well in excess of 10% is spent for this purpose.

Following a general feeling in French adult education circles that traditional education is unsatisfactory in the results it gives, many of the larger companies can afford to take a closer look at new forms of education and training and, in many cases, themselves invest in the development of open and distance learning.

The need to give access to cost effective training aids to smaller firms is apparent in France, as indicated by the following table, taken from "Legislation Sociale" of December 10th 1987 which shows that the biggest effort in adult training is being made in the large company sector.

No. of employees:	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
10 to 19	0.98	1.00	1.10	1.16	1.14	1.14
more than 2,000	2.91	3.06	3.36	3.45	3.62	3.82
Total of all co.s	1.88	1.97	2.14	2.17	2.24	2.34

Table I The percentages of the salary mass given over to the training of personnel in small and large companies (source: Liasons Sociales no.10110. December 1987)

The small company is faced with two major constraints in the search for satisfactory staff training. The first is that of freeing staff for training and the other is the investment. Hence in France, too, some form of distance learning may be the only way to offer training to members of small companies and this could provide a cost-effective means of meeting legal requirements. Nevertheless, the small company in France is perhaps the least aware of the concept of open learning.

Even in Britain, where considerable publicity has been given in recent years to the various forms of open learning opportunities available, the 1987 MSC survey cited above notes that only 35% of the British small businesses interviewed were aware of open learning compared to 85% among the large companies.

Only very recently have efforts been made to overcome the training dilemma of the small firm in France. Working groups are due to be set up over the coming months to look into how other European countries are dealing with the problem of training the small company manager. For example, the European PACE programme is attempting to address this problem through the use satellite technology.

French Approaches to Open and Distance Learning

In 1963, an interesting state-funded initiative came from the Centre National des Arts et Metiers (the CNAM). The CNAM is a state body concerned with adult education and offering a variety of evening courses through the 40 regional centres. The CNAM ventured into the field of distance learning in 1963 with the creation of the Tele-CNAM which offered evening courses leading to recognised national diplomas. Use was made of distance-learning supports as well as free air-space on FR3, the third television channel in France. The initiative failed, not because of its content or approach, but more because of a reticence on the part of the teaching profession who saw Tele-CNAM as a threat to their livelihood. The idea did, however, find an extension in the creation of the Tele-enseignement universitaire which was a joint project involving 18 universities to break into distance learning using the support of radio, tapes, records and video as well as printed material.

The Centre National de Télé-enseignement was founded in 1939 as a correspondence institute and has continued to this day under various acronyms including the CNEC (Centre national d'enseignement par correspondence) and the current title, the CNED (Centre national d'enseignement à distance). The target remains courses of secondary school level up to baccalaureat, but some specialised post-bac programmes are now offered thanks to agreements reached with a certain number of universities. Despite the all-englobing name, the Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance still relies heavily on print-based material, although it is now beginning to take a closer look at computer-based learning.

According to Jean-Paul Desbrueres of the 'Délégation à la formation professionnelle' and Vice President of SATURN, France has seen very little development in the field of open learning, due perhaps to the Cartesian approach of breaking needs down into rational chunks, thus at one point losing sight of the original goal. Didactic methods have been therefore developed in specialised fields and supports such as audio-visual, computer- based training and the videodisc have appeared and disappeared with the fashion.

These supports have been proposed as new tools in support of traditional methods of teaching, rather than as steps forward in the search for a more efficient form of vocational education and training. Examples of the Cartesian approach become apparent through national schemes such as 'Informatique pour tous' (computing for everybody), begun in 1985 and which consisted in training school teachers in data processing as a complement to, and certainly not as a reappraisal of, traditional teaching methods.

The most important aim in a number of these projects appears to be to keep up with new technological applications, so that they become ends in themselves rather than a means to facilitate the learning process. As a result costly projects have found their way into filing cabinets where they have been left to collect the dust. Consequently, the approach to training and education has not been greatly modified.

However there are some indications of further experimentation with open and distance-learning approaches. For instance, the 'Association pour la formation professionnelle des adultes' (AFPA) has a programme designed to give adults the possibility of a continuing education and involves a permanent faculty of over 10,000. This association is funded by the State and is now becoming interested in open and distance learning. Also, many individual universities are beginning to show an interest in distance learning, particularly through their adult continuing education departments.

The Case for Cross-Cultural Company Training

There are a number of reasons for assuming that in-house trainers should be interested in the development of cross-cultural programmes. These include cost-savings and the desire of multinationals to maintain an overall corporate culture through training policy. The possibility of offering in-house training programmes across national frontiers implies major cost-savings, since standard packages can be envisaged that only require adaptation on a superficial level e.g. language. Such packages can help to standardise training and develop a corporate culture across national boundaries. However, perhaps most important of all, the prospect of a single European market after 1992 will require a standardisation in approach in a range of business- related fields, that will be catered for only through a common corporate training strategy.

The Way Ahead

The aim of this paper has been to deseribe the open and distance learning situation in France and, drawing parallels from the British context, to suggest reasons why, despite the support by government and considerable investment by French employers in VET, open and distance learning has not been as readily recognised as a way forward in France.

When examining VET training in Britain and France, it is important to remember that there are, and will continue to be fundamental differences between the two countries. In the educational context, these differences are apparent on the level of language, history and culture. An understanding of the significance of these differences can suggest a way forward for cross-cultural training programmes, which are likely to become increasingly important with the approach of 1992.

Traditional instruction in France through the national education system costs the State something in the order of 200 billion francs per year and it is nevertheless thought of as being unsatisfactory.

Despite figures for the 1988 budget showing an increase of just under 5% compared to 1987, experts in France claim that providing a more satisfactory instruction to the masses would imply spending at least double the current annual figure and this is money that the State just does not have to spend.

According to the new way of thinking in educational circles in France, as expressed by Desbrueres in an interview with one of the authors, education must find a way to break out of its traditional straitjacket, a system which has little changed since Antiquity, and begin to cater for everyone. He argues that the new form of education should include three elements:

- a delocalisation - in other words, a system which allows study to take place outside a predetermined place

- a control over the pace of learning to allow the learner to gauge the time required for knowledge acquisition according to the constraints only he knows.

- a personal control over the content of the course.

Thus open and distance learning provide answers to this dilemma.

There is already a long tradition of distance learning in France through correspondence courses and more recently for instance, experimentation with computer-based learning. The need therefore would be to build on these initiatives in order to develop effective alternatives to the traditional view of teacher-centred education. Snell, Hodgson and Mann (1987) argue that distance teaching in Britain needs to re-examine its dissemination orientation to learning. Such a fundamental reappraisal would be even more pertinent for France, where dissemination is so deeply entrenched in the educational system.

It could be argued that the French expect an instructor based dissemination approach, due to their educational socialisation. For instance, there is far less free-study time allotted to the French student when compared with counterparts in England. French students tend to be very specifically guided through the process of learning: "l'encadrement des eleves", implying both guidance and structure, is an expression often heard coming from the lips of both tutor and learner. Another contrast is suggested by the approach in educational libraries, where in France books are often held behind locked doors; thus the concept of browsing along shelves in search of new ideas is somewhat impeded in traditional French educational environments. Such practices suggest that people in France could be somewhat ill prepared to experience open and distance learning later in life.

If such traditions in France represent potential stumbling blocks for open and distance learning based on self-discipline and independent scholarship, then a large proportion of the population (learners and teachers) may well need to have the educational umbilical chord cut, before accepting the idea of open and distance learning.

However, despite the more instructional tradition of French educators, the idea that France would have difficulty in accepting the self-learning approach to knowledge acquisition may not necessarily be true, as open and distance learning would meet various needs which are not currently provided for within the traditional system.

Two main categories of learners can be identified who would be interested in a system of open learning in France. The first concerns those who have been through the traditional education process and failed. They, it is argued, will be ready to try a new form of instruction through open learning since they are most aware of the failings of the classic system. The second category concerns those who have succeeded in the traditional system but who realise that open and distance learning are the only way forward for updating skills or preparing for an alternative career. Until now in France, this form of flexible learning opportunity through open and distance provision has not been available to them but it would seem that both groups are likely to welcome such programmes.

Another source of support for the development of open and distance learning will undoubtedly come from in-house trainers who are at the point of saturation in their training centres and welcome an alternative approach which will lift the costly constraints of time and place.

Also it may well be that a lead in cross-cultural open and distance learning will come from companies with operations in say both Britain and France, where packages developed in Britain will be adapted for the French learner. One of the authors is currently working with a multinational organisation with sites in Britain and France, to pioneer such an initiative.

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THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Dr Stephen Fox

ABSTRACT

Open and distance learning technology offers a new form of market mechanism for the distribution of knowledge which is increasingly presented as a commodity like any other. Information Technology is also having an impact on the technical and social production of knowledge and higher learning in general. This paper will explore a range of issues arising from this "mercantilisation" of learning, by which is meant the tendency for knowledge and learning to be seen as products, skills, and competencies produced for sale by what Berger (1987) has called the "knowledge industry".

Introduction

It has been argued that the status of knowledge is changing in the postindustrial age, hallmarked by postmodern culture, since around the 1950's (Lyotard, 1984; Bell, 1974), that is, since the postwar period of European reconstruction. The rapid growth of computerised information technology is both a product of and hastener of this alleged change. By providing new techniques for both the production and distribution of knowledge, it is argued, IT has increased the tendency for us all to see knowledge as a commodity like any other, to be bought, sold and exchanged. We now see it with a price tag attached, more and more knowledge and the opportunity to learn are benefits to be bought by private individuals rather than fundamental rights belonging to every member of a democracy.

Lyotard (1984) reminds us that the beginning of mass-education, like mass-health programmes, came in the wake of the French revolution when the social theorists and experimenters, such as Rousseau, Helvetius and La Chalotais saw widespread educational reform as a necessary precondition for democracy. Education became increasingly a State responsibility; and the legitimation for the increase in the production and distribution of knowledge was the emancipation of the people.

This legitimating strategy, competed with and/or complemented an older justification for the pursuit of learning, namely that knowledge was good in itself. Speculation, from the renaissance on had needed no instrumental purpose, not even the laudable one of the emancipation of the people, rather it was to be pursued for the sake of truth alone.

Against these legitimating narratives, it is contended by various current writers (Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault), that the advent of what is variously called postmodernism, neopragmatism and post structuralism is producing a revised justification for knowledge. Lyotard has coined the word 'performativity', meaning that knowledge is to be legitimated by its effects; and not simply its effects but the efficiency of those effects. For the value now placed on learning is no longer primarily its emancipatory influence, nor even truth for its own sake, but its valency in attaining and keeping a competitive edge for whoever purchases it.

Such is the broad thrust of many postmodern arguments and if they hold, certain implications follow for Open and Distance Learning (ODL). For if these arguments are sound then knowledge has become the possession of the powerful. IT becomes the major means for knowledge manufacture and ODL becomes a 'dream instrument' for the control of the ruled. A counter-argument is that ODL is simply a medium for the transmission of learning and does not necessarily promote the 'mercantilisation of knowlege'. However, to focus on the technical excellence of the medium without regard to the socio-political context is to, however unwittingly, collude with the performativity principle, allowing the efficiency of the means to blind one to the effects.

Much of the literature on ODL focusses on the technicalities of the technology and ignores the socio-political implications. To help rectify this imbalance, the present paper will appraise three issues: (a) the nature of knowledge, (b) the purpose of knowledge and (c) the implications for ODL in the light of the postmodernist challenge to humanistic education.

The Nature of Postmodern Knowledge

What is at issue under the postmodern condition is the meaing of knowledge in Western society. Looking back we can identify periods of transformation in the rules concerning what counts as reliable knowledge. Each of those periods was 'postmodern' in its day, in the sense that they were periods in which what was previously the 'modern' worldview came under radical attack. For example, the fourteenth century Italian renaissance inaugurated the subsequent rise of humanistic education which spread to Northern Europe through intermediaries such as Geert Groot, Thomas a Kempis and Desiderius Erasmus. Humanistic thought undermined the previous status quo of Scholasticism which as a species of knowledge was intimately bound up with the political power of the Church of Rome and the Christian worldview. Human speculation replaced divine revelation as the fundamental ground of reliable knowledge.

The argument of many current postmodernist thinkers is that we in the West have reached the end of humanism. IT and ODL are pivotal among many changes in our society in that they are radically shifting the ground of reliable knowledge. The data banks and computerised communications systems offer an operative knowledge without a necessary human agent. This is not to say that there will be no more human decision makers but that the impact of telematics is that our concept of the 'human self' is undergoing a radical change. For just as humanism gradually sapped the divine element in the nature of knowledge the current postmodernism is sapping the human element. What is it to be human? The technological hardware is not simply 'out there'; increasingly the iron is in the soul.

Lyotard (1984, pp 45) writes:

"The old principle that the acquisition of knowledge is indissociable from the training of minds, or even of individuals, is becoming obsolete and will become ever more so ... Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold ... Knowledge ceases to be and end in itself ... Knowledge has become the principle force of production over the last few decades".

In this view knowledge is now produced as a commodity the principle value of which is its productive capacity, that is, its ability to hasten the advance of productive technology through such devices as computer assisted design, and thereby gain a competitive edge for the purchaser. Performativity, the ability to be efficient and therefore competitive has become the rationale legitimating knowledge production and distribution. And ODL represents the market mechanism through which knowledge and expertise are bought, sold and exchanged.

It is therefore incumbent upon those who are developing the technology of ODL not to cut themselves off from the educational debate surrounding their specialist activity. For if the result of their efforts is to bring an end to humanistic education which has a thousand year history, at least some of their time could be spent reappraising the value of what their activities are in the process of terminating. Simultaneously, some of their time could be spent considering what sort of 'postmodern' values they might be creating. For just as it behoves the genetic scientists from time to time to evaluate the moral as well as the technical side of their tinkerings with the human embryo, it behoves the technologists of ODL to evaluate the moral and educational side of their tinkerings with the human learner.

Humanist educationalists such as FR Leavis (1943, p.23) during the second world war were already sounding warning bells against rampant technocratic specialisation:

"... the social and cultural disintegration that has accompanied the development of the inhumanly complex machinery is destroying what should have controlled the working. It is as if society, in so complicating and extending the machinery of organisation, had incurred a progressive debility of consciousness and of the powers of co-ordination and control - had lost intelligence, memory and moral purpose".

In short what has been undermined by the spectacular growth of the 'machine'- bureaucratic as well as technological - has been the coherent cultural centre to Western society (compare Bell, 1976). The acceleration of technical and professional specialisation has fragmented norms and values in the West, as the period of the 1960s epitomises. In the process the nature of knowledge has begun to change and with it the nature of university institution, which as the name implies has for centuries been the point in society where a unity among disparate disciplines has been maintained.

This unity of learning has for centuries been vouchsafed by the cultural values of humanism, which combines a respect for speculation and a belief in human unity. As Matthew Arnold (1897, p.9) expresses it:

"... because all men are the members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a general expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward".

Within the humanistic philosophy the institutions of education and learning have a unique responsibility to maintain the central cultural values of Western society and to maintain these as human values "separable from any particular religious frame or basis" (Leavis, ibid p.19). And it is within this tradition that most educational reform has been carried out including curriculum development. Stenhouse (1975, p.82), for example, argues that:

"Education enhances the freedom of man by inducting him into the knowledge of his culture as a thinking system. The most important characteristic of the knowledge mode is that one can think with it. This is the nature of knowledge - as distinct from information - that it is a structure to sustain creative thought and provide frameworks for judgement".

This stance is equivalent to what Lyotard (see above) has called "The old principle that the acquisition of knowledge is indissociable from the training of minds, or even of individuals". It is this position that is under threat by the ceaseless trend toward the commodification and mercantilisation of knowledge and learning that ODL technology promotes.

In brief, the postmodern condition is arguably changing the meaning of knowledge in our society. IT and ODL through packaging the 'goods' are reducing knowledge in information. The unresolved issue is from what centre, if any, of shared cultural values and ground we can begin to evaluate and come to some judgement on whether or not this is a good or bad direction for Western society to be heading. For the very fragmentation that needs to be critically appraised can no longer be so from any central ground such as the University institution used to be able to provide, because the fragmentation of the proliferating specialised disciplines has eroded the place of the University in the cultural life of society. The current state of the University institution, in which tenure is disappearing and individual disciplines to survive as intellectual enterprises have to compete for research and teaching funds in a corporate economy, is indicative of the cultural fragmentation of society brought about by disciplinary technical specialisation in the production system of 'information' and the media of ODL technology in the distribution system.

The Purpose of Postmodern Knowledge

The contention of some postmodern thinkers, as we have seen, is that knowledge is less and less good in itself or good because emancipatory, but is good for its performativity value. This raises the question 'good for whom?' There are no doubt many liberal humanists in the world, occupying posts within the 'knowledge class' (Berger, 1987), many of whom still espouse humanistic values and believe them to be at work within their educational practice. If these people embody humanism in their professional practice how can the 'postmodernists' (I use the label broadly to condense the argument, recognising that there are fundamental differences of opinion among so-called postmodernists writers for example, between Foucault and Derrida as well as between postmodernists and their antecedents for example, between Derrida and Searle, see Norris 1987, for an interesting discussion of these debates) claim that humanism is at its end, or that the purpose of knowledge has changed?

The postmodernists seem to have recourse to a modified version of class analysis. Lyotard, for example, writes:

"The ruling class is and will continue to be the class of decision makers. Even now it is no longer composed of the traditional political class, but of a composite layer of corporate leaders, high-level administrators, and the heads of the major professional, political and religious organisations".

Lyotard seems to be recognising the divorce of ownership and control argument (Berle and Means, 1933), or the 'managerial revolution' thesis (Burnham, 1942), both of which imply that possession of the means of productin no longer resides in the family hands of individual capitalists, but is spread widely through the agency of large institutions such as pension funds. In short, the argument runs that the proportion of owner capitalists is so small in terms of their voice in corporate and national decision making that they no longer comprise 'the ruling class' in Western society. The ruling class that Lyotard identifies nevertheless seeks to act in its own interests, which it claims are identical with the interests of the total social system. And it is within this revised version of a form of class analysis that the postmodernists argue that humanism is at its end.

The ruling class pays for research to be done and determines what sorts of research will be done. The higer education system, as a sub-system of the supposed social system, is increasingly governed by the performativity criteria of the corporate and political decision makers, that is, -

"The desired goal becomes the optimal contribution of higher education to the best performativity of the social system". (Lyotard, 1984, p.48).

Thus university research agendas are increasingly directed to producing arguments and proofs which benefit the paymasters. Technical, that is, politically and ethically neutral questions will raise funds for solutions to be found, but speculative and emancipatory concerns will not, unless they also can demonstrate in advance how they might contribute to the performance of the social system. Radical research which might question and critique the status quo might therefore find difficulty in applying successfully for funds among the high-level administrators, corporate leaders and so on who so obviously have little vested interest in inquiring too deeply in such directions.

Central to the postmodernist argument is that there is an equation between knowledge and power. Funds for knowledge production and distribution are only made available for those kinds of knowledge that promise to enhance the performance of the company or national economy, knowledge, in other words, that augments the power of the decision makers.

"Scientists, technicians and instruments are purchased not to find truth, but to augment power". (Lyotard 1984, p.46).

Under the postmodern condition knowledge is increasingly produced and distributed for utilitarian, functional reasons. The economic motive has become the legitimation for learning and education. The overall performance of the social system may depend on the sub-optimisation of parts of the system. If the index of performance is say 'living standards' then optimal absolute levels may be impossible without sub-optimising living standards in parts of the system. As Lyotard writes (1984, pp 62-63):

"... the system can count severity among its advantages. Within the framework of the power criterion, a request ... gains nothing in legitimacy by virtue of being based on the hardship of an unmet need. Rights do not flow from hardship, but from the fact that the alleviation of hardship improves the system's performance".

Humanistic values do not enter into the legitimation of knowledge production and distribution, since increasingly these are geared to the performance 'needs' of the system rather than, say, questioning the politico-ethical basis of the system. The possibilities for the enlightened critique of the social system are becoming fewer since it is not clear that such critiques contribute in any way to the performance of the system. The decision makers who control research budgets and directions increasingly pay for information that will have clear instrumental use and which is amenable to easy and systematic dissemination. In this way education becomes an induction into a "culture as a thinking system" in Stenhouse's phrase in which speculation and emancipation which enhance the freedom of man are less and less pivotal concerns. Moreover, the culture into which people are to be inducted, because of the very specialisation of technical, instrumental disciplines, is becoming increasingly fragmented. As the ex-president of John Hopkins University has protested:

"The failure to rally around a set of values means that universities are turning out potentially highly skilled barbarians; people who are very expert in the laboratory or with the computer or in the surgery or in the law courts but who have no real understanding of their own society ... Higher education has done itself a disservice by selling itself in terms of economic return". (Rehder, 1982, p.67).

This is, even professional training, as well as technical training, is becoming shorn of any central integrating ground which might put the specialist skills within a more general understanding of society including an appreciation of ethics, justice and politics.

Summing up the issues raised in this and the previous section, the postmodernist contention is firstly, that the nature of knowledge is changing, becoming more like an informational commodity to be produced and distributed. And secondly, that the purpose for knowledge is also changing, being increasingly geared to the power requirements of the decision makers; thus the raison d'etre of knowledge is its performative value, namely the competitive edge it gives the decision makers in the arenas of economic, industrial, social and political struggle.

Postmodern Knowledge and Open and Distance Learning

ODL, as an educational innovation costing large sums of investment finance, has like other forms of education been subject to a wide ranging debate about legitimation and justification. And as Snell (1987) has portrayed the rhetoric and certain interpretations of practice are at the very least ambiguous. On the one hand, ODL represents 'freedom to learn' 'learner centredness' and 'open access' all of which are species of rhetoric belonging to the emancipatory narrative of legitimation which arose within humanism through the events of the French revolution and which Snell (1987) has identified with the rhetoric of some kind of 'Marxist Utopia'. On the other hand, ODL represents 'self-help', 'self development'. 'lifeskills' and the opportunity to equip, or re-equip, oneself with the knowledge, skills and competencies with which to flexibly navigate the vagaries of the labour market. And in this sense ODL adopts the legitimating narrative of performativity, by which learning is valued for its pragmatic effects in enhancing the efficiency of the social machine as managed by the decision makers.

ODL is therefore an educational movement with competing versions of its social and educational mission; it is not simply a new medium of distribution, the technological problems of which seem to be the main focus of current research. Indeed the key issue raised by ODL is that of the nature and purpose of knowledge vis a vis power in contemporary society. As Lyotard (1984, p.67) has said regarding the computerisation of society, of which ODL technology is a part:

"It could become the "dream" instrument for controlling and regulating the market system, extended to include knowledge itself and governed exclusively by the performativity principle".

Thus as the product and labour markets are constantly transforming themselves, requiring new skills on the part of the participants ODL represents an efficient means whereby individuals can gain a vocational 're-tread'. As the ex-director of the Foundation for Management Education has put it:

"Every company and every individual working within the company should embrace the concept that education does not take place in a discrete period of time preceding employment, but is a continuous process which lasts through most of the employee's working life ..." (Nind, 1981, p xxvii).

Or again as Lyotard (ibid p49) puts it:

"... knowledge will no longer be transmitted en bloc, once and for all, to young people before their entry into the work force; rather it is and will be served "a la carte" to adults who are either already working or expect to be, for the purpose of improving their skills and chances of promotion, but also to help them acquire information, languages, and language games allowing them both to widen their occupational horizons and to articulate their technical and ethical experience".

In this context, of which ODL is a significant part, "the question ... now asked by the professional student, the State, or ~~institutions of~~ higher education is no longer "Is it true?" but "What use is it?" ... "Is it saleable?"... "Is it efficient?", (ibid, p.51).

ODL is one of many technological pressures toward the commodification of knowledge into utilisable bits of the total body of knowledge. On the one hand it offers an emancipatory solution to the problems of access to higher education thereby breaking the monopoly power of the university institution. On the other hand, the kinds of knowledge most amenable to efficient packaging and the current wants of the 'consumer' are those which are of immediate instrumental use in surviving in a severe market system rather than the kind of knowledge which provides a structure for enlightened or radical critique. For:

"As much as it is in the interests of the system, and therefore of its "decision makers", to encourage professional advancement (since it can only improve the performance of the whole), any experimentation in discourse, institutions, and values ... is regarded as having little or no operational value and is not given the slightest credence in the name of the seriousness of the system" (ibid, pp 4950).

It is not in the system's decision maker's interests to distribute the intellectual wherewithall to critique the system from within unless this is with an eye on improving its efficiency, not of questioning and formulating judgements on its moral, juridical and polictical basis. Consequently ODL as an educational movement might question its effects with the intention of responsibly distinguishing which legitimating rhetoric is the Trojan Horse for what hidden political agenda and what anyway are the merits of the cases. For as the disciplines of knowledge production fragment in proliferating technical specialisms destroying the unity of knowledge within the universtiy, and the means of knowlege distribution are widened by ODL technology, again undermining the coherence of the university institution in its dissemination function, several questions are left hanging:

(1) If the purpose and nature of knowledge and its acquisition are changing in the ways suggested by the postmodernists, is that a good or bad thing? That is, should knowledge be reduced to information?

(2) Should there be an institutional centre which functions to produce a unity amongst the disparate disciplines, as the University has to some extent?

(3) Should there be a kind of meta-discipline, such as philosophy, which functions as a centre ground for a discourse on the assumptions underlying the knowledge claims of the many disciplines?

(4) As ODL in particular, offers an alternative market machanism to the traditional university/higher educational institution how should, if at all, the 'training of minds, or even of individuals' side to the acquisition of knowledge be maintained in the new media, given the tendency for ODL to commodify bits of the total body of knowledge into discrete packs of information?

The purpose of this paper has not been to propose solutions to these questions but to raise them as issues for those involved in researching the technology of ODL.

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OPEN TO QUESTION: OPPORTUNITIES IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

John Sanders

This is a personal view of OPEN LEARNING. It draws on experience in and knowledge of Adult Basic Education, Open College Federations (of the accreditation type), the Open Tech Programme and the Open University. It is very much a first stab at trying to draw together and make sense of these various strands. Its focus is ABE, defined in a broad way, (1.) and in particular how this relates to concepts and practices of OPEN LEARNING. It seeks to reveal the many exceedingly open features, often taken for granted or under-stated, which are characteristic of good ABE practice and to note the constraining or closed feature of some OPEN LEARNING systems. It draws a distinction between the all-encompassing philosophy and the actual practice of OPEN LEARNING and explores the implications of this for ABE. Whilst accepting without question the commendable and compelling arguments for opening up learning, it urges caution and clarity in adopting and adapting OPEN LEARNING approaches in ABE.

'OPEN LEARNING is a very simple concept' according to YTS News (Jan. 1988). You could have fooled me! What is more apparent to the casual observer and to a number of eminent exponents is the 'considerable confusion about what open learning is and isn't, and what it can and can't do'. (2.) Part of the confusion stems from the use or non-use of capital letters. Sometimes people (like me in the preceding paragraph) hedge their bets and use fully capitalised OPEN LEARNING. More usually they use either Big O Big L or little o little l formulations. Often, though, the two usages are found in the same document, apparently used interchangeably, to describe the same thing. An article or leaflet starts with Big O and switches half way through to little O; or (perhaps more worryingly) starts with a small o and grows to a Big O! This is more than just a matter of poor proof reading. Underlying it is an elision of the vigorous advocacy of the broad concept of open learning which few would argue with, and a particular form of educational and training practice - Open Learning - which despite its many strengths also has significant operational limitations. To question the latter is sometimes taken as a disavowal of the former. Whilst acknowledging the artifice of a distinction between theory and practice, this paper seeks to clearly distinguish between the lower-case open learning, the general philosopical approach, and upper-case Open Learning, as illustrated in the packages, workshops and schemes, which carry its name.

This elision of practical manifestations and philosophical underpinning is mirrored in many of the varied definitions of the term. These speak of 'arrangements', 'a method of learning', 'a System' and 'learning provision'; but describe this mode of delivering learning by suggestive and resonant references to desirable qualities or concepts: 'opening up opportunities' 'gaining access', 'independent and individualised learning', 'negotiation', 'control', 'empower[ment] '. These definitions, however, are useful in revealing the key ideas which underpin the broad concept of open learning. It is about access and removal of barriers ('An Open Learning System is one in which the restrictions placed on students are under constant review and removed whenever possible'); flexibility ('arrangements to enable people to learn at a time, place and pace which satisfies their circumstances and requirements'); and learner control (Open Learning ... is a method of learning which empowers the individual to negotiate content of study, mode of study, length of study, and time of study'): (3.) all admirable, commendable aspirations. Other definitions and descriptions push the boundaries of open learning still further. Educational guidance and counselling; the assessment of prior and experiential learning, informal education, education for capability, outreach, open college networks, Access and Return to Study provision are all seen as part of a wider open learning movement. One LEA' s definition includes 'any form of learning which is not traditionally organised'. Some might argue that the definition and usage of the term open learning has become so open-ended as to become meaningless. For 'open' read 'good'.

Part of the problem does indeed lie with the word 'open'. Rather like 'community' in the preceding generation it has been added to a bewildering array of concepts or institutions to imply that they are somehow progressive, accessible, a good thing. Advertising agencies as much as educational providers have latched onto the word's elasticity and its ability, simply and effectively, to add a sheen of modernity to the host noun. Further, as Roger Lewis has perceptively written, "open' implies the existence of something that is the opposite - i.e. 'closed learning''. And indeed it is notable how definitions are often couched in negative terms: by reference to access denied or prevented or to constraints, barriers and restrictions, which are attributed directly or by implication, to 'conventional course structures' and provision in traditional adult and further education. Good, new, modern open learning is counterposed against a bad, old, traditional closed learning. (4.) Even those who know the dichotomy presented is caricatured and anachronistic, may find it hard to resist the power which it currently holds.

The concept of open learning, despite or perhaps because of its catch-all nature, has a lot of weight behind it - a veritable jargonaut! It embraces and draws sustenance from a range of broadly progressive institutions, commendable activities and compelling arguments for opening up learning. But what is the reality of Open Learning, the practice, as experienced by consumers and providers?

Open Learning usually takes one of a number of forms - distance learning (necessarily heavily material centred and subject to constraints on the amount of support available); workshop-based, (drop-in or learning by appointment in an Open Learning resource base) or local systems (take-away materials studied at home or work with regular tutorial support) - or a variant on these. Such arrangements often add to the range of learning options open to people and are ideally suited to many categories of potential learners in certain domestic work or geographical situations. The development of such facilities and opportunities can only be welcomed in the most enthusiastic terms. This welcome becomes more muted however when Open Learning is presented as something apart from mainstream education and training, as a panacea for particular or general ills, or as the only alternative. It is at this point that it becomes necessary to investigate its inherent limitations and constraints.

What follows are personal, impressionistic, but not I believe totally inaccurate reflections on much current practice. Open Learning is a mode of delivering learning. It is largely materials and resource-based. It is fairly traditional in terms of the curriculum delivered. In recent years it has taken on a strong vocational emphasis and has revolved around the selling of packages of material ("the currency of open learning ... [as] the open learning package). (5.) Its potential flexibility in terms of developing personal learning programmes is rarely used. For all the talk of a Lego brick approach to learning it is clear that we are still at the Duplo stage. Its effectiveness and achievement is not yet proven. The data is incomplete or just not there. Figures are usually available about enquiries and enrolments, units sold or programmes started; little hard evidence exists on student progress, completions and achievements. More work certainly needs to be done in this area before the claims of Open Learning to be forward-looking, student centred or simply 'good' can be taken at face value.

One way to scrutinise such claims is to explore the idea of "openness" and construct frameworks for evaluating the extent to which a scheme is open. Joan Roberts has drawn a graph model for Open Learning with "Openness of Access, Pace, Time" as one axis and extent of "Negotiation of Curriculum Content" as the other. (6.) More recently Roger Lewis has put forward "the open learning continuum" in the form of questions ("indicators of openness") which reveal the type and extent of choices given to learners. Underpinning such analytical tools is the recognition that "open learning schemes are never open on all aspects and when they are open they are rarely totally open".

The limitations as well as the positive indicators of openness are revealed by applying such tools to established Open Learning schemes. Open Tech for example scores only moderately on Joan Roberts' Access, Pace, Time axis, and low on the Negotiation axis. Particular Open Tech projects display a number of important open characteristics according to some of Roger Lewis' criteria, but are shown as relatively closed on others. How does Adult Basic Education fare?

On Joan Roberts' graph ABE scores well in terms of learner centredness; and, in its more flexible drop-in manifestations, scores well in terms of Access, Pace and Time. Roger Lewis doesnot apply his openness test to ABE but commonsense answers to his basic questions would place ABE very much at the open end of his "open-closed learning continuum".

Drawing on these invaluable frameworks and existing definitions it is possible to construct a checklist of features which indicate and reveal the openness of learning within ABE:

- place - a variety of locations (colleges, centres, libraries, community locations, work, people's own homes)
- pace - student dictated
- time - a variety of times available (day/evening, 21 hour provision, drop-in facilities), year-round provision
- price (the often ignored dimension) - tuition is most often free, charges are rarely prohibitive
- entry/enrolment - open to all people (no entry qualifications, prior knowledge or skill required)
  - roll on/roll/off (people can join or leave at any time
  - minimum group size small or not restricted (eg.1:1)
- learning materials - not pre-determined; immensely varied often student chosen
  - topical, real, everyday (articles from today's newspaper, the gas bill or this morning's post)
  - often personalised (individual worksheets)
- learning approaches - start from and build on people's own experiences, skills, interests, language
  - various methods and strategies tried and used
  - interactive (with other students/teachers/volunteer tutor)
- assessment - student directly involved in evaluating (and often recording) own progress and negotiating own targets
  - accreditation of achievement possible in some areas (eg. Open College Federation schemes or AEB Basic Tests)
- exit opportunities - can lead to a variety of possible directions (other education/training provision; job or promotion opportunities; enhanced confidence and self-esteem.)

This is not to claim that ABE is totally open. The foregoing analysis is based on a composite picture of good practice. There are often restrictions on time and place. Although theoretically open to all, provision does not attract the millions who have difficulties with reading, writing and number. Its public nature, entailing an element of 'coming out', the pressure to perform in front of others and the stigma still attached to 'illiteracy' can all in practice restrict access and entry. Nevertheless in many of its practices ABE is exceedingly open; and in its philosophy openness and flexibility are constant themes. Perhaps it too should be added to the ever-extending open learning family.

If in practise ABE is already very open and has many affinities with the broad philosophy of open learning: how does the practise of Open Learning match up to requirements of ABE? Like everyone else ABE tutors are encouraged to get involved in Open Learning - how appropriate and useful are Open Learning practises for ABE?

As we have noted Open Learning is primarily about materials and delivery. The content of these materials is usually fixed and closed. It locks a student into the thought processes of (or more optimistically engages them in a dialogue with) the writer or team of writers. Similarly as Roger Lewis acknowledges "most open learning schemes transmit existing [closed?] curricula, differently delivered" In spite of heavy promotion of computer-based training, inter-active video, telephone tutorials and video cassettes, most often the materials are print-based. (7.) These texts often require a high reading level or can be off-putting in terms of tone, language or merely weight. They may have a short shelf-life and quickly become out of date. More pertinently for ABE (though this is often also a criticism from potential industrial users) they are never quite right for your precise purpose: and 'customising' takes time and money.

The learning approaches embodied in the materials and the form of delivery may also be unfamiliar for those coming from an ABE background. Perhaps reflecting the socio-cultural mood of our times, the approach is simultaneously individualistic and impersonal. There is often a lack of intimate contact and interaction with others doing the same thing. The very nature of the student engagement with the learning format can engender feelings of isolation and failure (especially when students' answers are hopelessly different from 'smart alec' specimen answers!) It is hard not to conclude that whilst Open Learning is an excellent option for those who are already experienced learners, with well developed study skills and confidence, serious questions remain about its efficacy and value for those who are less confident, skilled or experienced in learning.

This sense of dissonance can extend beyond just the materials and learning approaches to the very ambience of Open Learning. The upmarket, high-gloss, high-tech image of some schemes whilst attractive to many, can also have the opposite effect. In a haunting phrase a student who sought to progress from her local community-based return to study class to the next stage in a city-centre Open Learning Workshop quickly concluded that Open Learning was "not for the likes of me".

This is not to argue that Open Learning has no place in ABE. After all, On The Move and subsequent campaigns have had notable Open Learning elements and indicated something of the power and potential of an integrated awareness-raising - referral - materials approach. In Manchester, for example, there are plenty of examples of productive interaction between good Open Learning and ABE practices. The FLAG Project in South Manchester allows negotiation of content, pace and location of tuition (sometimes in the student's own home) alongside accessing and customising of existing resources. Drop-in workshop provision allows more flexible attendance and tutorial patterns together with limited use of pre-packaged study packs or standard material. A number of ABE groups successfully use Open Learning materials, like OU Community Education packs, as stimulus material or as the framework for short, negotiated self-generated courses. As ALBSU has pointed out "basic education needs, students and learning opportunities are infinitely more complex than the stereo-type which developed in the mid-1970s". (8.) There are plenty of people within ABE provision who can cope with and enjoy Open Learning materials and distance or workshop-based approaches. They include those who wish to improve their writing rather than their reading, those with extensive work or domestic commitments and those in geographically isolated areas. Open Learning or some hybrid may be the only option possible in such circumstances: it may also be the best. It can also be an excellent way for someone to explore a particular interest in depth or test out a change in direction.

ALBSU stresses in its recent Annual report that "some students both like and can benefit from open learning". (9.) Different learning materials, media or approaches can stimulate interest and provide variety. Open Learning materials can serve as stimulus materials for groups or individuals. Some students prefer and indeed work best on their own. Open Learning facilities and materials can provide vital extra practise or support or back up material. ABE and Open Learning are not mutually exclusive options: both include 'open' and 'closed' elements. The possibility or perhaps even the imperative exists for fruitful, but careful, collaboration and inter-action to draw out the best mutual features .

However if such collaboration and inter-change is to flourish, it needs to be engaged in cautiously and realistically. Caveats need to be noted. "Beware the neat package in basic education"; equally beware of the course hand-out or knocked-off worksheet dressed up as Open Learning material. Open Learning is not a cheap option: adequate resourcing is essential. As ALBSU notes "the development of open learning has considerable cost implications" - in the development of new or amending of existing materials, in staff training and for the provision of adequate student support. There may also be cost implications for the individual student. If Open Learning is to become a real option for ABE students it needs to be carefully monitored, extensively (and perhaps expensively) supported and to draw on good practice in ABE and existing 'closed; learning systems. The result is likely to be something close to a hybrid which can perhaps be best described as 'Ajar Learning' !

References

1. There is no standard definition of ABE. For the purpose of this paper I have used the definition first proposed in the 1979 ACACE Report, A Strategy for the Basic Education of Adults, "by ABE we mean a range of educational provisions and associated learning which includes literacy and other verbal skills, including English as a second language, basic skills in number; and a body of general knowledge relevant to the day-to-day lives of adults in society; together with those other elements of education both formal and informal without which. ... adult(s) might find. ... (themselves). ... cut off from continuing educational, vocational preparation, or cultural and recreational activity."

2. Roger Lewis, 'What is open learning?' In, Open Learning (June 1986) p.5.
3. These definitions are taken from Lewis op. cit. S & N Rowlands, Into Open Learning (1986) p.2.

4. Roger Lewis, op. cit., p. IO acknowledges but regrets the implication (of the use of the phrase 'open learning') that all existing provision is closed and gives examples of the open characteristics of many traditional classes.

5. See for example, Lester Greenacre of CITB, 'What is wrong with open learning?' In, Open Learning (Nov. 1987) p.41.

6. Joan Robert's'Open Learning Report'to Derbyshire LEA 1985-6, p.
7. Council For Information Technology. Information Sheet No. 5 'Open Learning' (April 1986) p.3.

8. 'Open Learning - an approach to Basic Education?' In, OLS News (Dec. 1987) p. 4 .

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A PARADOX? OPEN LEARNING IN A BUREAUCRACY.

Sue Rose and Bob Parker

SUMMARY

This paper explores the nature of Open Learning, the paradox of Open Learning in a bureaucracy and the implication for implementation. The basis for this paper is the experience of both the writers together with the issues discussed at the above conference.

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper 'A Paradox? Open Learning in a Bureaucracy' is the result of the writers' experience of implementing open learning in a Health District in the National Health Service. It is not an academic study. The Health District is in a compact urban area and employs approximately 6,000 people. Until the open learning project began there had been no attempt to introduce open learning within the District. More traditional training and development was well established and accepted throughout the District.

The writers of the paper were aware before the conference that they had very few answers and that most issues relating to the implementation of open learning raised another raft of questions and points for further consideration. The discussion at the conference highlighted this even more. Perhaps we should quote Winston Churchill:

> 'This is not the beginning of the end. It is the end of the beginning'.

This paper will therefore define what the writers mean by both open learning and bureaucracy and then summarise the discussion which took place within our session at the conference.

OUR DEFINITION OF OPEN LEARNING

Before the conference it had become clear that we needed to define the term open learning. This was underlined at the Conference. We must therefore, in this paper share with readers our understanding of open learning.

As we found working with open learning within an organisation, a great many people understand it as a method of training, which stands as an alternative to training courses. We found difficulty in that definition as we worked. It appeared that open learning was more fundamental than simply an alternative to courses. We therefore came to the conclusion that open learning is a concept and not a method or a system. Systems can be put into or imposed on any organisation large or small. A concept, the definition of which, includes 'mental expression' is a state of mind, a belief, a value which can't be imposed.

The concept in this case is about 'openness of learning' which is related to the culture of an organisation and needs to be inextricably linked to a more 'open' management style.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN LEARNING.

Following the initial activity within the District to implement open learning we found the following to be important characteristics in relation to openness of learning.

1. Learner centred/Learner choices; consideration being given to the real and not the perceived need through accurate identification of training needs, with a shift of responsibility for learning to the learner. Implicit in this would be learner choices about what to learn, how to learn, when to learn and why learn.

2. Flexibility; to allow the choices above to be made through open discussion with the learner's manager. To allow for more adaptability to meet learners' needs by managers and those with a training specialist role.

3. Continuous and developmental; to allow continuous dialogue between learner and manager to enable needs to be met at the 'right' time for the learner as part of an overall developmental process.

In order that the above are met there is a need to consider organisational roles and culture.

1. Organisational roles:

a) Training Specialist: needs to be positive and have an advisory and consultative role to be able to supplement the more traditional provider role. Strategic involvement in the organisation to allow for a positive approach would be necessary, to enable a training input into areas of organisational change at an early stage.

As well as direct training activity, facilitation of learning through the roles above will be necessary in order that barriers to learning are overcome or minimised.

b) 'Learners' manager': needs to accept responsibility for the development of staff as a natural part of their job. This would include regular counselling to examine job training and career needs. As well as tutoring or coaching in the work setting. This requires an acceptance of a continuous process of development within the normal environment.

2. Culture

A more open learning culture legitimises "trying and failing", seeing it as a learning experience from which to increase knowledge and skills. It would be possible to allow constructive questioning of the status quo and an acceptance by those questioned that they may often not have a suitable answer. Thus collective learning by both boss and subordinate can take place and the boss no longer expects to be a fountain of all knowledge. This would be achieved in a fear-free working environment where each is valued for their different competencies and levels of competencies. Overall, the culture being described in one which encourages a wider perspective to be taken of the organisation and both allows and encourages more open communication between staff.

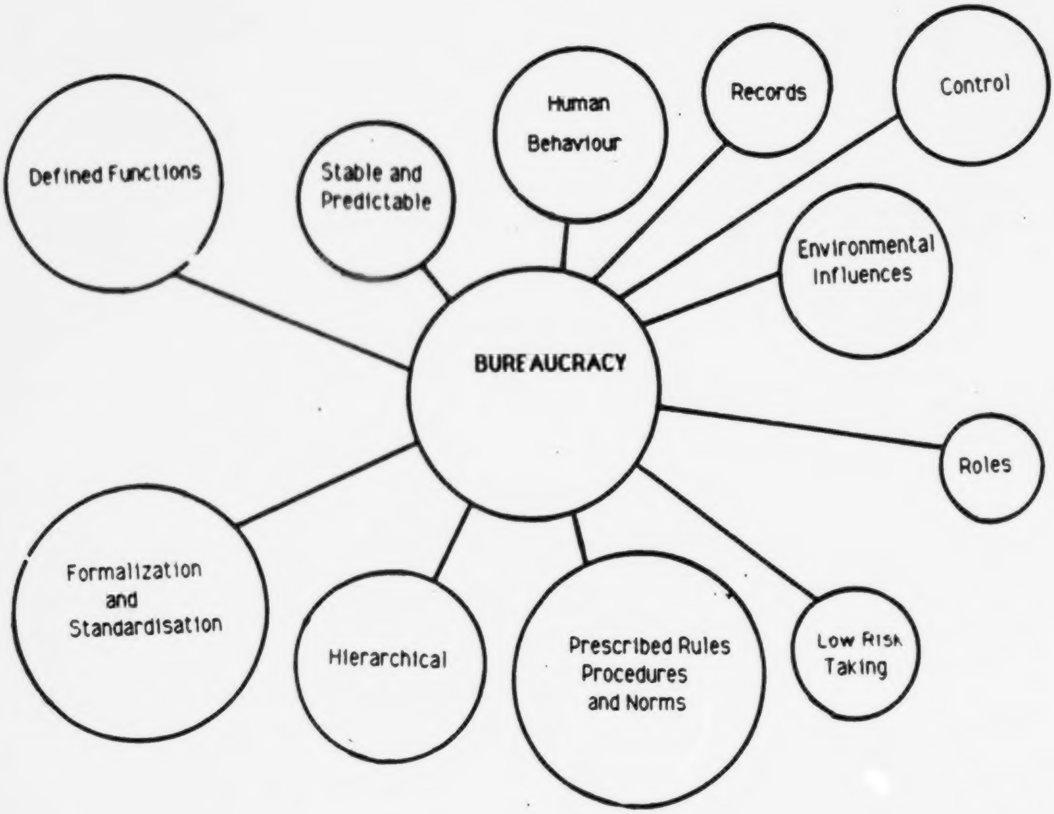
In order to determine whether using our definition of open learning it can become part of the culture of a bureaucracy, we need to explore the concept of bureaucracy.

BUREAUCRACY

Although Weber's (1948) classic early twentieth century contribution to the discussion and debate on bureaucracy had the greatest impact, it has been suggested by Abort (1970 p16) that the invention of the word belongs to an M de Gournay in 1745. He took the conventional term 'bureaux', meaning office and added the word derived from the Greek suffix for rule , in order to signify bureaucracy as the rule of officials.

Hegal in his philosophical writings on Prussian bureaucracy conceived that the bureaucracy of a public administration was the bridge between State and civil society. Clegg and Dunkerly explain;

"He regarded civil society as representative of particular interests such as the various professions and corporations, while he considered the State to be a mediator of these, as the representative of the general interest. The bureaucracy was regarded as the medium through which particular interests were translated into general interests."Whilst subsequent writers have looked at the nature of bureaucracy by taking a different slant, words such as control, rules, dominancy have been consistently used. These and similar words appeared when we tried to identify the factors which influenced the bureaucracy in which we were working. Figure 1 identifies these factors;



It is clear from this very practical analysis that the historic debate on bureaucracy still has relevance today. The base culture of our own Health Service bureaucracy is still prescribed rules, procedures and norms. Increasingly with National Performance Indicators, standardisation and predictability is not just within one Health District but throughout the whole Health Service - District being compared with District, Doctor being compared with Doctor. The economics of scale influence the amount of individualism allowed, small individualistic hospitals are closing, choice in supplies are limited by central ordering. Despite the implementation of Griffiths there is still a clearly defined hierarchy with prescribed functions and roles within it. The structure may vary but the underlying control and prescription is still there. Perhaps the most important factors of a bureaucracy in relation to open learning are control and low risk taking. Bureaucracies have tight control mechanisms whether through the necessity of cash limits, political philosophies or managerial preference. The tight control leads to a culture of low risk taking. Employees within a bureaucracy are normally not encouraged to take risks. Where risk taking is condoned, it is only where the risk taken results in a successfol outcome.

DISCUSSIONS AT CONFERENCE

This brief analysis of open learning and bureaucracy leads us to conclude that the two concepts do not sit easily together. Clearly 'openness' does not only go with learning, there is openness in relationships, openness in management, openness in organisational culture. Can our definition of open learning happen in a bureaucracy where there is standardisation, prescribed rules, where expectations are of stability and predictability? That was the discussion at the conference, in what turned out to be a lively and controversial session where passions ran high. It seemed that we were challenging many rarely spoken attitudes such as 'we like bureaucracies because they are safe and cosy'. 'We like bureaucracies making decisions for us'. 'We like being told what to do in the name of advancement'. 'Open learning is good'. These attitudes would seem to be somewhat incompatible if considered against our definitions.

A potential consumer of the Health Service suggested that providing staff were competent, how they became competent was irrelevant. The need for competency in this discussion showed clearly the problems in raising the risk taking threshold.

If openness to learn includes openness of syllabus, how do individuals within the organisation agree acceptable standards and identify relevant learning needs? This seems to be the key to ensuring the consumer receives a competent service.

The view was expressed that the NHS and perhaps other bureaucracies could not allow an open learning culture. It was accepted that for some training, for example that relating to drug prescribing and dispensing, prescribed training was needed. Much of the vocational and clinical training of NHS professionals is of a similar prescribed nature. The authors however, still believe a more open approach can be achieved with the ownership of learning moving more obviously to the learner.

Resources are traditionally used by training and development staff within the Health Service to provide courses on specific topics. It did seem that there would need to be a massive change in the role of the designated training staff from one of director/provider to one of advisor/facilitator allowing for the move in the responsibility for learning. The use of training resources if open learning was used would need to be altered; time, money and materials would need to be spent on helping people understand the learning process, not giving direct topic lectures. Employees need to understand how to identify their own learning needs and to analyse how these needs can be met.

In other words there was a change needed not only in roles but in who had control of the learning needs and the learning itself. Open learning puts the control and responsibility for learning with the individual. This control and responsibility is not always accepted by individuals or the organisations in which they work.

Who or where is the control was another discussion area. The Health Service and many other bureaucracies have many professionals working within it. Despite Hegel's comments that a bureaucracy transferred various particular professional interests into a general State interest, the Health Service is still a collection of professions. These professions jealously guard their ability to prescribe rules, procedures and norms for their members.

We argued that the culture of the professions both individually and collectively is counter to that needed in open learning.

We were able to come up with one or two statements which received general agreement.

1. Open learning - however defined - is not a panacea.

2. There needs to be a balance between desired outcome and method of learning.

3. The need to clearly define the terminology used.

4. There was a need to actively support all learners, and give them permission to learn.

5. Learning culture must be a factor of the organisations' culture.

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OPEN LEARNING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF THE WORKPLACE

Dr. Mary Benwell and Peter Hughes

ABOUT US

The Road Transport Industry Training Board is one of the few remaining statutory training Boards. We still operate a levy grant system and in 1986/7 we approved c. £21m in grant payments to companies. Over 13,000 companies are in scope to the Board.

We exist, quite simply, to increase the quality and quantity of training within the industry. The present Management Development group, and the initiative which we will describe, was started two and a half years ago following a period of uncertainty about the Board's continuation and structure.

ABOUT THE INDUSTRY - OUR "MARKET"

The Road Transport Industry is large and extremely varied. It covers haulage and removals businesses, motor factors (parts), body building, retail and repair activity, as well as car lease and rental. The forms of operation involved vary from large sophisticated operations working nationwide with state-of-the-art premises and facilities to the smallest local garage. Thus the largest of the in-scope companies has 6,000 employees, but if we take a threshold of 30 employees then we find that over 90% of the companies which are in scope to the Board lie below that figure.

Much of this majority of smaller companies owes its existence to the activity of a self-made entrepreneur either in this or, more likely in the previous generation, These managers and directors did not get where they are today by sitting in seminars or reading about management theory. The industry culture is very much one of the player manager involved in many functions as the company and its environment changes. Only the very largest companies have systematic internal training provision and a formal approach to management development.

In considering this "market" or these "target learners", a number of barriers, or reasons why they may find training inaccessible, can be identified .....

- they find it difficult to absent themselves from the workplace for long periods, and, in particular, to spend whole weeks away

- they will only be motivated in the first instance to learn what is seen as directly relevant to their work, and those which provide an obvious pay-off in improved performance

- they may find the transfer of knowledge and skill from the training environment into the work context difficult

- their learning style tends towards the experiential/practical rather than the knowledge based/theoretical

- they may find it difficult to find out what is available and to organise themselves to use it.

- there may actually be few relevant courses i.e. at the right level

- the timing of availability may not fit their own circumstances.

In looking at existing training provision, it became very obvious to us that, while open learning offered the possibility of overcoming certain of these barriers, existing provision for manager open learning did not quite provide what we were seeking. There were a number of reasons for this

- existing managerial open learning was not always at an appropriate level. It tended in our view, to have underlying assumptions of postgraduate-level learners with strategic/policy level jobs in big companies

- it came in off-putting whole courses of 100 hours' learning or more. We thought we needed tractable smaller units which could build up and which would equate more closely to the 2-3 days' training which was the preferred direct-training unit within the industry

- the language used was often rather textbookish and bore little resemblance to the literature with which our target learner would feel most comfortable

- there was a strong emphasis on theory/knowledge and concepts and little on skill and application. The latter tended to be left to the individual as a non-explicit transfer task.

For these reasons we, hesitantly, decided to set up our own system and develop our own materials.

WHAT WE DID

The System

The system that we came up with was one for which we coined the term

'Supported Open Learning'.

The system is dependent on the basic building blocks of:

Open Learning modules, plus support items.

The Modules

The building blocks of Supported Open Learning are the Open Learning Modules themselves. At present there are 29 of these, each one covering a different managerial skill. By late 1988 there will be 45 modules. The modules are grouped into 8 series, each series covering a different type of skill

- Supervision
- Personal Effectiveness
- Managing People
- Managing within the Law
- Managing Business Information
- Managing an Operation
- Managing for the Future
- Managing the Smaller Business

Each series has 4-6 modules within it. The modules are all complete in themselves. Although they can be built up and related to one another, the learner can choose which one to start with. Each module takes about 10-12 hours to work through thoroughly, ideally in chunks of 2-3 hours at a time. But the individual can pace himself/herself. The user also decides when and where to work on it as well as how many sessions to spend on a module, and when. Each module lists its learning objectives and shows a series of steps to help the user plan his/her time. As the user/learner works through a module there are a number of self-tests, exercises and mini projects to enable him/her to check that a particular point has been learned. These points are always about skills related to the user's own work situation. In this respect the RTITB modules are distinctive - they are not educational modules, they are work-relevant .... And they have been designed in a way which is stimulating and interesting to use, with

- colour

- illustrations in places, and

- simple text, without a lot of unnecessary jargon.

The titles of the twenty nine modules available so far, plus a brief description of what each one is about is shown in the Board's MD 90 brochure. All Board field staff have samples of the modules, which they will be happy to show to anyone.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

In addition to the modules, which are designed to be used by an individual, the Board has developed a number of items for use with groups of learners. These enable a G.T.A., MOTEC (The Board's own training establishments), a college, or an in-company trainer to develop periodic short sessions with small groups of people. Many people find that such group sessions can encourage and motivate them to continue working alone, as well as providing some additional training. Supporting materials normally cover a whole series, or the group of skills from 3, 4, or 5 modules. But they, too, are extremely flexible in use, and a trainer can adapt them to his or her own requirements.

At present there are only a few supporting items

- a video with trigger scenes for supervisors and first line managers

- a similar video covering Series 2 (planning, controlling, delegating, holding meetings)

- a video describing the problems facing a company and how these were tackled

- an audio tape summarising the learning points in Series 5 (Managing Business Information)

- a 'company' on a micro-computer disc to cover 'what if' questions raised in Series 5 (Managing Business Information) .

But these basic resources are only a part of it. They are the Products around which a Process must be developed.

The products are, then, a basic learning resource, something visible, something to relate to. The use of open learning format makes them capable of self-management, complete as a flexible accessible learning resource. The skills practice around which each module is built provides reassurance on relevance, applicability, and provides a means of self-checking through use. They also provide a basis for discussion with a supporter within the company, or outside.

The use of the term 'Supported Open Learning' was deliberately coined in order to emphasise the process of support and to encourage discussion of what it is and how it can work. Support is, essentially, something which varies with circumstances. The message that we have given is that, because the materials are self-sufficient and freestanding, support is on non-technical activity.

What we are ultimately seeking to create is a means through which, wherever possible, integral training can be developed in company around the open learning materials - moving firmly from Product, to Process.

HOW IS IT WORKING?

To date we have c 10,000 modules in use and over 900 organisations have the material. These are simply the products around which we have to make the Supported Open Learning process happen.

Obviously the whole approach is something of a culture shock to the industry. They like the idea, but getting open learning to work as integral training - i.e. fully within the community of the workplace - will take time. What is chiefly required is a building of CONFIDENCE by the various parties within the 'contract' that now has to be made . . ...

- confidence on the part of senior staff in the business that acknowledging a need to learn on their own part is not a weakness

- confidence throughout a company that people can accept a degree of responsibility and ownership of learning - theirs as well as their subordinates'

- confidence to discover which is the best way to work with open learning for them - and accept that what works best for them is O.K.

- finally - confidence on our part, when asked for a blueprint, to talk through the fact that we don't have a universal model of what is right. We are no longer instant experts or wand wavers.

The business of opening up learning is very threatening to many conventional roles, and all of those involved have to change their perception of what they are about.

- the teacher as 'expert' rather than group leader,

- the manager as a 'super person',

- the trainer as someone who waves a wand and changes someone else's behaviour,

- the training board as the creator purely of training procedures - a sort of expert system.

What is already becoming very clear is that those companies who have thoughtfully and carefully picked up open learning, and briefed their staff on what it is about, are becoming addicted to learning. Even in companies where such careful preparation was not in place, it has been possible to debrief in a way that picks up and reinforces the confidence points noted above.

I believe that where open learning is being used according to our S.O.L. (Supported Open Learning) concept we are beginning to see the creation of a learning culture within the work community. The main challenge for the future will be to sustain and develop it after the more voracious user companies have 'got through' key topics which are of intrinsic and very obvious relevance to them.

THE ROLE OF AN EXTERNAL SUPPORT CENTRE IN SUPPORTING IN-COMPANY OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVES

Dr. Peter Critten

I should like to shift the focus of the presentation onto the following title:-

THE ROLE OF AN EXTERNAL SUPPORT CENTRE IN SUPPORTING IN-COMPANY OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVES

and to put forward 4 propositions for debate. But first, I'd like to briefly fill you in on the background to the project.

Within the Hotel and Catering Training Board I am responsible for the development and delivery of open learning material mainly to supervisors and managers within an expanding hospitality industry. We began in this area five years ago in response to the results of a survey which indicated that only 25% of existing supervisors and managers in the industry had any kind of supervisory or management qualifications and that colleges (the traditional route to management qualifications in our industry) would not be able to meet the demand in the future. Assisted by funds from the MSC Open Tech Programme (from 1983-1986) we produced nine self-study packages a number of which can now be combined together to lead to a BTEC Continuing Education Certificate in Hospitality Management, Martin Emerson is Head of the Hounslow Open Learning Unit which is based at West London Institute of Higher Education. I came in contact with him as a result of visits I was making on behalf of the Open College to assess the potential of Colleges in the North London area as possible Open College Support Centres. In May last year Hounslow Open Learning Unit completed a survey of some 80 companies in the borough to determine whether and to what extent an Open Learning resource centre could meet local management training needs. The conclusion they arrived at was that there was support for a local resource centre geared up to meet management needs,but they were much less clear as to what Open Learning was and how it could help them. I'd like to quote you a paragraph from their report:

'The features of Open Learning are very difficult to convey to those who have had no practical experience of it. A training course they understand; self-instruction they can accept, computer software, video packages they can appreciate and back-up support by tutors and user groups and telephone hotlines they find interesting and reassuring. What they cannot visualise is how they all come together in one neat package called 'Open Learning' which can be adapted to particular needs'

The problem of 'visualising' what open learning is is one that has haunted me ever since we began our scheme and I suspect is also a picture with which you too are familiar. Over the last year I have become increasingly aware of how limiting is a purely 'distance' learning approach and yet so far that is all we have been able to offer our students. Martin Emerson, on the other hand, has played a leading role in introducing lecturers in FE to open learning and training them to offer appropriate support to their students. Could we combine our resources to explore what would be an appropriate support system for the kind of students that were working through our own material? More importantly could we use Hounslow Open Learning Unit as a focal point for industries in the locality who were all in the same industry and therefore shared common problems/opportunities for learning and development?.

Thus was born the proposal that first went to the MSC in November 87 for support for a collaborative project between the Hotel and Catering Training Board and Hounslow Borough Open Learning Unit in collobaration with local organisations in hospitality and recreation to 'develop a trainer training programme to enable managers and trainers to develop effective and supportive OL provision'.

We have already secured commitment from four major local employers:

TRUSTHOUSE FORTE
PIZZALAND
FULLERS BREWERY
BRITISH AIRWAYS (Cabin Crew)

Though each represent different sectors they are all involved in the service of food, beverage and accommodation to the public; all share similar problems when it comes to training staff: shift work, cosmopolitan workforce of different languages, culture.

The design of the project put forward to MSC has three broad stages:-

1. TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

2 . SELECTION OF LEARNING MATERIAL (PARTICULARLY OPEN LEARNING MATERIAL) TO MEET NEEDS

3 . TRAINING TRAINERS TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF SUCH MATERIAL

So far, so good - well, not so good in that MSC have delayed approval but this has not been because of the aim or content of the project but over just what they would fund. On the other hand, it has given Martin and myself more time to reflect on what we are trying to achieve and this has led to four propositions which I'd like to debate with you, the resolution of which I believe will result in the project being more innovative than it may otherwise have been.

The first proposition relates to the nature of the TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS. If we develop trainers/facilitators to be more open to the opportunities of 'open' learning we must also open up the traditional way of identifying training needs from being a set of 'bone dry' subjects towards a more personal statement of the context in which individuals learn and demonstrate competence at the work place. As one who has been with a Training Board for the last 14 years and before that on the receiving end of a Training Board's policies I am all too aware of the administrative convenience of identifying a so called skills or knowledge 'gap' and then identifying a particular training course or package to 'plug' it. We must beware lest we use so called 'open' learning packages in the same way. **The 'openness' is not a function of the product but the context in which it is used and supported.** Our project needs to help trainers look anew at the learning problems and opportunities their organisations provide in the workplace.

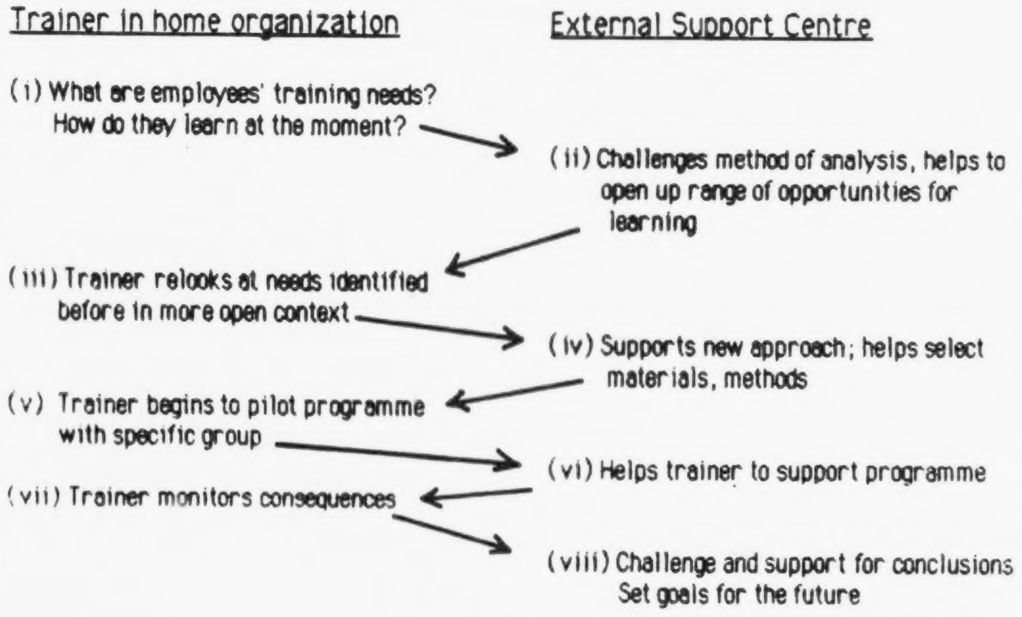
Proposition 2 relates to the role of the external support centre. Distance learning by its very nature is often presented as a lonely process, whereas the learning that takes place is often as a result of reflection on and sometimes challenging of the material itself. This requires an external agent to help in this process. A key role of the external support centre should be to help the trainer CHALLENGE and REFLECT on the mode of support he/she is providing in-company. **The twin functions of 'challenging' and 'supporting' will be a key part of the learning process.**

Proposition 3 relates to the nature of the open learning material selected. If we can accept that open learning is as much about the context in which the learner learns and the support available, then **the content itself and its design must be sufficiently flexible to be accommodated in a wide range of circumstances of use.** As a commercial provider of open learning material this is very much a challenge for me. Having begun by producing large and rather unwieldy packages (because it was more cost-effective to do so) we are now breaking down the material so that it can be more easily integrated into a variety of support systems. But how far can we or any provider afford to go?

The final proposition really ties in with the first: **criteria for measuring success of an Open Learning scheme will be as much about creating more potential and opportunites for future learning as what has been learned in the past.** Perhaps there is a clue here for assessing the health of a truly 'open' learning organisation.

These are the propositions I'd like to debate with you now. We are not going to change our proposal to the MSC. As far as they are concerned it will still be about Training Needs Analysis, selection of open learning material and the training needed to support it. The reality, though, will look rather like this:

USING A COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE TO CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT IN-COMPANY TRAINERS SEEKING TO OPEN UP ROUTES TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Trainer in home organization

External Support Centre

(i) What are employees' training needs? How do they learn at the moment?

(ii) Challenges method of analysis, helps to open up range of opportunities for learning

(iii) Trainer relooks at needs identified before in more open context

(iv) Supports new approach; helps select materials, methods

(v) Trainer begins to pilot programme with specific group

(vi) Helps trainer to support programme

(vii) Trainer monitors consequences

(viii) Challenge and support for conclusions Set goals for the future

USING OPEN LEARNING TO AID MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NHS

David Fisher and
Joan Durose

Background

The session began with an introduction (by David Fisher) to the work of the Open Learning Project in Shropshire Health Authority. The project is a two and a half year initiative which is funded by the National Health Service Training Authority (NHSTA).

The aims of the project are:

1. To devise a model or models for using open learning in the NHS.

2. To ascertain the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of open learning options compared with conventional training solutions.

The remit of the project limits its activities to management and supervisory development and Information Technology training.

The project is one of only two in the country and was set up in October 1986 with the Project Manager appointed from lst January 1987. The only other member of staff assigned permanently to the project is a part-time clerical assistant/support worker.

The project was established in Shropshire after the Health Authority was approached by the NHSTA. The training climate in existence at the time was probably influential in the choice of location. The Health Authority was recognised as having a stable and effective training staff. There were existing 'in-house' and external development programmes running for Health Authority staff and these were supported by managers. (Some managers formed part of the tutorial team for in-house programmes.) The Health Authority had been a pilot site for testing Open Tech material under an MSC/P.A. Management Consultants project. The climate therefore was fairly supportive to the establishment of the project.

The initial thoughts of the NHSTA staff and District staff who set up the project suggested that the Project Manager would be involved in a range of tasks. These included publicity work, identifying and analysing training needs, counselling learners and potential learners, liaising with suppliers and delivery units, arranging support, tutoring, communicating with other Health Districts and advising and reporting to the rest of the NHS regarding the work of the project.

Initially the philosophy within the project led to Open Learning being defined as 'A method of removing some of the barriers which exist in conventional development programmes'. The early work of the project tended to concentrate on evaluating and assessing the Open Learning material available. As the project is progressing I think that we are now talking about 'flexible opportunities for development' and the 'openness' has extended beyond the material used to the whole essence of the programme.

Information from the Project

Early in 1987 the project identified three categories of information which other NHS managers and trainers would find useful regarding open learning activities, these were:

A. The Material

e.g. information on:

Subject covered
What the package comprises
Cost
Recommended study time
Facilities required to study the package
What are the stated objectives of the package
A brief outline of the contents of the workbooks etc.

B. The Learners

e.g. information on:

How was the training need identified and what were the learning objectives
Why was open learning chosen
What support was given to the learners (tutorials, seminars etc.)

(a) built into the package
(b) extra from the organisation

How long did the study actually take vs recommended time. What extra material, books, references, case studies etc., did you utilise outside the package.

C . The Outcome

e.g. information on:

Did the package meet the learning objectives
Did the study lead to any changes in the learners' behaviour/attitude etc.
Did the study result in any appreciable change in the learners performance at work related to the subject matter, If so how could you tell

This information need has directed the work of the project towards activities which supply the answers to some of these questions.

Project Activities

The first major task was to produce a resource directory detailing over 200 open learning packages. This has now been distributed to over a hundred Health Authorities, to suppliers and producers of material and to managers within Shropshire Health District. This will be followed by publication of case studies and examples of good practice.

The models developed for using open learning materials were based on three basic systems:

1. Development courses leading to qualification

2. Short modules dealing with a specific subject or subjects

3. A 'Drop In' approach where individuals utilised learning material on a 'mix and match' basis

The design system for any of these options is based on general training practices but with special consideration to certain key elements which are considered vital for the sucess of 'Open' programmes.

These key elements include:

Pre-learning counselling
Supporting the programme
Monitoring the progress Evaluating the outcome

Areas to Consider are;

1. Whether the support system can assist in the use of generic management materials in an NHS environment and whether it can help integrate work based NHS specific activities with the theories contained in the work books.

2. How is the process evaluated and who does it - is it the learner, his/her manager or the trainer.

3. What is the trainers role in the process.

For the rest of the session we concentrated on one particular activity, a first-line management development programme leading to the Certificate of the Institute of Supervisory Management. This programme was developed from a model prepared by the Institute and was chosen as a comparison to an existing 21-day conventional (block release) course.

The course utilises ll open learning workbooks and involves the students in 13 days attendance over a l2 month period.

Once developed, the programme was offered to other neighbouring Health Authorities as a way of testing the transferability of the package.

David then handed over to Joan Durose of North Staffs Health Authority to explain why her Health Authority chose to join in with the pilot scheme.

North Staffordshire Health Authority's Experience in Open Learning

Setting the Scene

North Staffordshire Health Authority Community Unit provides a service to the local population through 39 separate clinics and health centres. The number of staff employed is in excess of 480, the majority of whom are nurses trained to specialist District Nurse and Health Visitor levels.

In July 1987 I was appointed as Unit Personnel Officar with special responsibility for organisational development. On first analysis there were some outstanding issues having implications for organisational development:

1. Geographical spread of the Unit.

2. High professional status and specialism of the majority of Unit staff.

3. Narrow career structure - in nursing there are only 13 management posts responsible for over 350 members of staff.

Soon after appointment I was separately contacted by two individuals who discussed their need for some additional skills/knowledge in management; one as a newly appointed Sector Nurse Manager and the second for career purposes.

Also at this time an approach was made by David Fisher through the District Training Department regarding the possibility of places on an Open Learning ISM course. When information regarding this opportunity was given to staff in the Unit a further two District Nurses expressed an interest. One of these was a male nurse who was currently involved in a NEBSS Distance Learning course run by a local College of Further Education. He had found this experience rather disappointing as the course was entirely private sector orientated and was very 'distant' in terms of tutor contact and assistance.

All four of these individuals were accepted as course members.

Some pertinent points

A preliminary meeting was held with the course participants and their respective managers. It was obvious that the managers were concerned as to their role, their responsibilities and, as so much emphasis was placed on knowledge sharing, the potential threat to their power.

There was initial discomfort as to the work place emphasis. Questions were of the "how" variety rather than 'why,'. This has been one of the major successes of the course - that quickly and easily a transition has been made seeing management learning as something to be done at work rather than for work.

The programme tutors wondered how group identity would be established. On traditional day release courses time may (or may not) be utilised in ice-breaker exercises. However this has not proved a problem - the sharing of common issues related to the learning has been enough of an ice-breaker.

Study days have been used by participants to look at the "how" of learning rather than the 'what". The learning to learn is another foundation stone of this exercise.

The study days have also assisted participants in an identification of skills rather than an absorption of facts. This adds to the flavour of the experience. Participants gain confidence in their own abilities at work and fuel this confidence on the study day. There is no question as to who holds power and has ability - this is not a tutor based course.

Although a small beginning, I have confidence that this experience is the trigger for true organisational development. Change will not be imposed if it comes about via individuals looking at themselves in the working environment and having open dialogue with their managers.

Discussion amongst the course participants underlines the worth of the activity. The nurse with previous distance Learning experience speaks for all when he says "This is the real way to learn - why didn't I think of it before?"

Discussion

The group then discussed issues arising from the presentation.

These included:

Practical issues regarding the role of the learners, managers, tutors and trainers, how "Open" this mode of learning is, particularly as deadlines are set within the course framework, and how you can evaluate the progress of the group compared with the "traditional" mode of development.

As the discussion progressed points raised were:

1. Whether the learners are "special" individuals who would have made the most of any course they undertook and whether they are truly representative of all NHS staff.

2. Is this "mix and match" approach to open learning the most appropriate solution to meet the needs of an employer.

3. What (if any) are the extra benefits that this mode of delivery provides

and

4. How can managers, trainers and educationalists throughout the country obtain information on work such as that of the Open Learning Project in order to assist them in their own work.

The general feeling of the group was that this method was acceptable and appropriate for both the learners and the organisation involved. The "spin off" benefits include better communications in the workplace, learners able to develop self- development skills within a formal learning framework, learners able to pursue issues relevant to their own personal development at a greater depth than that required by the programme and the learners' managers obtaining development themselves by participating in the support system for the programme.

The latter part of the discussion concentrated on "networking" information regarding Open Learning activities. The limitations of current systems were discussed. The potential role of the Manpower Services Commission in co-ordinating a system which gives details of materials, usage, programme design and "real" learner, manager and trainer reviews was explored at length and those present felt that such a system would be beneficial to all users of Open Learning systems.

The session ended with the participants being invited to collect information sheets detailing the main work of the project. In particular these covered the format of the ISM Certificate course, the assessment regime and the guidelines to the management project which is an integral part of the course.

For further information on the work of the Open Learning Project contact:

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INCREASING THE OPENNESS Of LEARNING AT WORK

Robin Snell

ABSTRACT

Open learning is a set of ideals, the attainment of which will never be absolute and will always be a matter of degree. Attempts have been made to make some formal educational provision more in line with these ideals. Less attention has been paid to making the place of employment setting more of an open learning environment. I discuss some specific dimensions of everyday learning in organizations, the extent to which they are 'open' rather than 'closed', and possible measures for making them more open. I then consider more fundamental cultural and structural barriers to openness in learning in British organizations which appear intractable but which demand further study.

INTRODUCTION

Definitions matter in this article,

The trouble with the term 'open learning' is that it allows us to slip into talking, writing and thinking as if there were a simple dichotomy between it and 'closed learning'. Let me quickly test the dichotomy to destruction. I define 'learning' very broadly as an increase in the learner's insight, competence or understanding. I define 'open learning' as the most idyllic state of affairs that I can imagine: where there are widespread opportunities in the general population for learning to take place on demand at the convenience of learners.

In this scenario, the conditions necessary for learning to be 'open to' learners, i.e. available at their convenience, would include the following:

- A desire on the part of the learner to explore or master a particular domain of enquiry or expertise.
- Abundant resources, e.g.
  - suitable materials readily at hand
  - people willing and able to act as experts or facilitators
- No financial barriers or 'red tape' attached to resources
- Opportunities to meet with and learn with other people with a similar focus of interest
- No social pressure to:
  - consider some matters and ignore others
  - reach certain kinds of conclusions and not others
  - Undergo particular kinds of 'learning' experience and avoid other kinds
- Openings for whatever kinds of experience the learner judges necessary to further their enquiries or in pursuit of mastery
- full preparation, on the learner's own terms, for their chosen learning experiences
- Scope for reducing competing commitments, such as a heavy load of routine tasks, during the chosen period of open learning.

This scenario is Utopian indeed! Right now it can only apply to a privileged few, yet the fundamental premise of open learning is that it can be available to all. So open learning does not exist.

We will be stuck with this paradox unless we stop thinking of 'open learning' as a thing. We need instead to think of 'openness' in learning. The 'Utopian' properties listed above are poles of dimensions which, taken together, describe the extent of openness versus closedness in a learning system. The first dimension in the list, for example, is the extent to which learning is driven by the learner's desire for insight or competence.

Large numbers of the population spend much of their time at work. It is therefore worth investigating the extent to which workplace learning environments at one's place of work are 'open' or 'closed', and how they might be made more 'open'.

TYPES OF LEARNING FOCUS AT WORK

Let me first identify three different kinds of learning focus. The typology is not exhaustive but illustrates the range of possible focuses for learning at work. Then, for each focus in turn, I will discuss the extent to which learning in the workplace is characterised by 'openness'.

Command of Rules and Procedures

Most people's jobs demand a working knowledge of a set of rules and procedures, and most of these are learnt 'on the job'. These operations can be so tightly defined that, give or take an argument or two, what is meant by them could be readily agreed on by 'reasonable' people.

Awareness of Contexts and Strategies

In order to "get on", employees need to understand "cultural" forces, the "unwritten rules" within their organization. Some ways of getting things done will be more acceptable than others; some ways of treating staff members will lead to difficulties. The "rules" may be slippery to define, have multiple meanings and be subject to continual change, but a grasp of them is essential.

There will also be shifting political currents and allegiances in an organization. Employees will vary in their sensitivity to ulterior motives in the dealings of others, and in the extent to which they can locate their responsibilities in a wider context, Someome with a poor grasp of the political context is vulnerable to exploitation. Someone without a sense of organizational mission may fail to realise what is expected of them and find themselves out on a limb.

Development of Inner Resources

Employees will also need to build up and draw on "inner" resources. The notion of a finite set of "competencies" is gaining favour, but I think it is impossible to pin such qualities down and give them precise labels, since they pervade the whole person and are not distinctly packaged components. In order to show what I mean by "inner resources", I need nonetheless to suggest some examples.

Some qualities enable the person to assert their rights by creating patterns of work that suit them, while responding squarely to social demands. My labels for such qualities include emotional stamina, assertiveness, self-confidence, and "style" (doing difficult things elegantly and in good humour). Each quality is unique to the person, i.e. one person's way of being assertive is different from another person's.

Some qualities enable the person to support and cooperate with others, and I would contend that membership of an organization carries with it duties of citizenship which require intimacy with essential core values such as compassion, a sense of justice, and self discipline.

Regardless of whether we agree about the labels and definitions of the requisite qualities, the key notion is that inner resources and qualities are needed for organizational membership.

THE EXTENT OF OPENNESS IN LEARNING AT WORK

Learning at work tends not to happen at the convenience of the learner-employees, and therefore for most people the degree of openness in the workplace learning environment is low. For an appreciation of the measures that may be taken to make workplaces more characteristically "open", the extent of their openness or closedness on various dimensions needs to be understood.

Openness for Learning Rules and Procedures

To illustrate the extent to which workplace environments may be open for the learning of rules and procedures, I will take the example of low ranking local government administrators. For many of them a major job demand is to get on top of the formal rules and procedures which apply to their caseload.

Variable desire for learning.

There are some circumstances in which learning rules and procedures is a delight. Many cricketers and cricketing umpires will have loved their study of the laws of cricket. Some local government administrators no doubt have an equal fascination for standing orders. But learning rules and procedures is not always a delight. Some administrators hate their jobs, and learn the rules and procedures out of necessity to earn a living,

Patchy learning resources

For some administrators there will have been abundant resources for learning the rules and procedures. They may have received comprehensive instruction from their superior or from their colleagues in the first few weeks of their job, and then will have been in a position to "refer to the book" when dealing with cases until thorougly familiar with the procedures. Unfortunately, many administrators have a less resource rich learning environment. They will not have had careful job instruction. They will have had to search for written procedures. The information they needed will sometimes have been scattered around the organization. Their hard-pressed colleagues may not have always been willing or able to give time and support when it has been needed.

Financial and authorisation constraints: few opportunities to meet others

Some kinds of administrative labour within local authority departments are often divided on a neighbourhood or district basis, people in different offices dealing with the same rules and procedures but applying them to cases from different localities. Such administrators often express a wish to meet with their opposite numbers in other offices to discuss best practice in applying the procedures or rules, but regret the lack of opportunity to do so because of the difficulties in getting authorisation or claiming justification for travelling expenses.

Social pressures to focus on particular topics and answers

Low level administrators have little say in their learning environment. They have set portfolios of tasks and are forbidden from intruding on work that is the prerogative of qualified professionals. The rules and procedures they learn are meant to be foolproof: there is supposed to be a "correct interpretation" of them. This dimension of the learning of procedures is inherently closed.

Few openings for new experience

Rotation between routine administrative jobs may not happen for a number of reasons. Organizational inertia seems to stand in the way of job swaps, and barriers may exist between departments making it hard for outsiders to get in except at the very bottom. New jobs often demand upheaval such as more travel or a house move, for which one might justifiably expect some recompense. In the context of contracting services, promotion or regrading opportunities are slim.

Incompleteness of preparation

Many administrators have found themselves trapped in jobs where the routine demands were unexpectedly difficult to master. They will not have received vocational guidance prior to applying for the job, or may simply have been slotted into a post on reorganization without consultation. One administrator, for example, was delighted to have been made head of a newly created administrative section. After a few weeks in the job he realised the scale of the technical and logistical detail that needed to be mastered and that no one in his section knew where to start. He spent the next few years struggling, along with his staff, who looked to him for guidance, to get on top of the detail, and found the period exceedingly stressful.

Heavy caseload and confinement to rules and procedures

Perhaps the most salient dimension on which low level administrators' learning environment could be said to be 'closed', is the extent to which they are at liberty to off-load their case load and learn about other aspects of the work in their organization. The need for bureaucratic efficiency means that administrators are expected to process large numbers of cases after a minimal learning period. Temporary off-loading by isolated individuals, during sickness, holidays, etc., is tolerated. 'Day release' for courses is encouraged, But even if the courses are based on an 'open learning' philosophy, it does not increase the 'openness' of the workplace as a learning environment.

Openness for Awareness of Contexts and Strategies

To illustrate the lack of openness of organizational environments to learning about contexts and strategies, I will discuss the position of middle managers. Much of their work demands getting things done with and through other people, not all of whom are subordinates in any direct sense, and many of whom are more powerful figures. Compared with lower level administrators, there are perhaps fewer respects in which their learning environment is closed,

Variable Desire for Learning

While many managers enjoy their dealings with people, some loathe being 'in charge' and/or dislike working in teams. They would sooner work 'solo'. Since responsibility for managing staff or collaborating socially with peers usually goes with promotion, some ambitious employees find themselves with duties and responsibilities that they would rather not exercise.

Patchy learning resources

Managerial strategies and contexts cannot be understood by the book, but there are potentially many kinds of resources that the manager can draw upon when learning about them. These resources are scarcer in some organizations than others.

Models are one kind of resource. It is possible to know a good managerial strategy by 'being on the receiving end' of someone's approach, and subsequently to set out to emulate them. Unfortunately in some organizations such positive models are scarce. Negative models, bad managerial strategies, abound in some organizations, where distrust is high and cooperation grudging. While it is possible to learn much from negative models, i.e. knowing what not to do when dealing with people, it is equally possible to replicate misbehaviour. Hence some managers report having automatically copied someone's approach, thinking that 'that must be what managing is about' until realising, at a later date, that there are better strategies.

Discussion with others is a valuable resource for understanding contexts and strategies. The nature of discussion may vary enormously, but there are many potentially valuable facets. It might involve being counselled (someone lending a sympathetic ear to one's troubles and helping one think through possible courses of action), or receiving feedback (constructive criticism) on the success or otherwise of the way one dealt with a particular challenge. It might simply offer one a sense of company, an antidote to loneliness, helping one to feel that it is worthwhile trying to make things better. Someone may offer new ideas. It can be exciting, as in the sense of conspiracy one can get when working out a strategy with a friend. Despite such potential value, many managers discuss strategies and contexts neither with peers, nor with their boss, nor with a 'mentor' (a wise colleague taking an interest in their progress).

Reasons for this failure are complex but may often be something to do with harshly competitive 'company culture' or with lack of trust in relationships in a particular team or section.

So, in theory, resources like the above could be available in abundance to managers. Something is holding them back.

Restricted openings for new experience

One source of contextual understanding for some managers has been experience of work on the shop floor, opportunities to attend board meetings, moves to HQ, from the periphery or vice versa, or work in different functional departments. Contextual change is most valuable for contextual learning when the chgnge has been more than a 'tour visit', and has involved specific jobs to do in collaboration with one's new colleagues, enabling one to become thoroughly familiar with fresh perspectives on working.

Opportunities for such mobility are rare in some organizations, either because of organizational decline, or because of rigid demarcation lines between functions.

Incompleteness of Preparation

Few managers are given any significant preparation for the specific social demands of a particular managerial job, or for the demands of managerial work in general. Some are lucky enough to be given accurate contextual intelligence for a new job, i.e. an account of the problems faced by the previous incumbent, a thumbnail sketch of the most important characters and what concerns, pleases, or infuriates them ... a benevolent new boss, a mentor who knows the grapevine, or colleague confidante may be the source of such help. This is rare.

Managers seem to learn about social context mainly through coming up against 'people problems' or 'obstacles to getting something done', and trying single-handed to find a strategy for solving them.

Up to a point one can claim this to be the essence of the manager's job. There is no 'formula' to follow for resolving people problems; someone has to find out how to manage in each unique context.

I contend, nonetheless, that managers tend to undergo unnecessary distress in their learning because they have been inadequately prepared for the situations they are plunged into. Managers undoubtedly do learn through making embarrassing mistakes, exposing their own shortcomings, and struggling under stress to master pressures. With fuller preparation, would not the mistakes be smaller, the shortcomings less dramatic, the struggle less stressful?

Every managerial job will require the manager to learn. One way of preparing people for the demands of learning would be to equip them with an understanding of typical patterns of learning. For example, problem solving may be used more elegantly as a source of learning.

Small mistakes are valuable sources of learning. To learn from them entails not being defensive and blaming lack of success on others, but rather constantly looking out for things in one's own conduct that require improvement.

Striving to get on top of new demands is less stressful if one has anticipated the demands and practised one's response in advance. One manager knew that a new job would entail public speaking, so before he assumed his new responsibilities he took every opportunity to address small meetings, give talks in voluntary organizations, rehearse speeches in front of friends, etc.

Learning at work would be more 'open', in the sense of being undertaken in a more fully prepared manner, if deliberate steps were taken to help employees to explore how various patterns of learning might be put to use.

OPENNESS FOR DEVELOPING INNER RESOURCES

A sense of success and achievement and a sense that one is being cared about gives a firm foundation from which to tackle new challenges and adventures which can give rise to development, in turn giving rise to a sense of achievement and possibly praise. This is a 'virtuous cycle' of development. Closedness in learning environments militates against such 'virtuosity'.

Variable Desire for Development

People change at work, but unfortunately not always for the better. Continual set-backs and a sense of being a failure can kill off energy for development. Struggling with administrative, contextual and strategic learning that does not happen at one's convenience and which leads nowhere, can leave a legacy of disillusionment, bitterness and cynicism.

Patchy resources for development; few opportunities to meet with people interested in development

The main potential resources for development are other people: providers of support, confrontation, stimulation, or sympathy. This can be the springboard of support from which one can tackle challenges on one's own. Few people report this kind of colleagulal or mentoring relationship.

Social pressures to ignore development

In many organizations, risks are discouraged because mistakes are punished. There may be an overwhelming preoccupation with business targets but not a corresponding encouragement to set personal goals for achievement, such as keeping an ambitious new venture alive for a couple of months and finding out a lot about the business environment in the process.

Restricted openings for new experience

Once the demands of a middle management post have been mastered, freedom to develop may depend on promotion to posts of a certain level of seniority. Development can take place without the scope to influence the direction of events, but only up to a certain point where one has become adaptable. Subsequent development depends on the opportunity to exercise discretion over events.

Incomplete Preparation

It is said that 'perturbation attends development': that extending oneself necessarily entails discomfort. But this discomfort need not be distressing or painful if one is ready for it.

Moral support from other people is some preparation. Discussing what is entailed by development is also a form of preparation, so that while it may hurt a bit, when it takes place one is not unduly alarmed or shocked by it. Further preparation for development would entail the learner having the opportunity to assess the level of adventure or risk they would like to tackle, being given the reponsibility to try it, and support in reviewing their success.

None of these measures of moral support, preparation for and planning of development appear to be anything but rare in organizations.

THE EXTENT OF THE BARRIERS

The British Open Learning establishment has yet to turn its attention to the task of making working environments more open in respect to learning and development. A project of 'embedding open learning' into our working lives would imply radical changes to orgmnizations, since at present few job contexts offer much openness in learning. There may in some cases be immediate potential to increase openness, and I have mentioned possibilities above. Yet there seem to be fundamental barriers that are immense and difficult to break down without extreme turbulence.

Structural Barriers

Formal patternings of tasks and authority in organizations seem to mitigate against sufficient flexibility for learning and development in most roles, particularly at the lowest levels of seniority. Hierarchy and bureaucracy may prevent an increase in openness, yet at least provide some order to the way tasks get done.

Cultural Barriers

The notion of a 'career' as a process of learning and development is less popular than its meaning as a means to higher status, power and salary. This reflects a national cultural tendency to divorce learning and development from work. Ideas about openness in learning have penetrated into the education world, but have not spread beyond it.

Another manifestation of the divide between the worlds of learning and work is the failure of schools, colleges and Universities directly to address the processes of learning through 'life experience'. 'How to Study' workshops are provided to help people follow their scholarly courses, but not 'How to Learn the Most from Working Experience Without Damaging Your Health'. Consequently, many people do not think of learning in and through work, and do not plan it. Learning and development at work happens as a by-product of getting the work done or making one's way towards the top, and are planned systematically neither on an organizational basis nor by individuals.

In Britain we also hold rather individualistic notions of enterprise, achievement and success. While there is nothing so crude as a tendency not to support other people where there is no immediate pay-off for ourselves, there is some uneasiness about the notion of helping.

BREAKING THE BARRIERS?

Why try to break these bigger barriers? I have assumed that the ideal of open learning in work would be a 'good thing' to approach. I would justify this on the grounds of more widespread personal freedom and fulfillment, and also less suffering, since a better grasp of learning and development should lead to its more elegant practice. I had hoped to offer suggestions on what might be done to break down the general barriers and embed in our national culture a concern for learning to learn and interpersonal support. Now I think there is little point in making suggestions until we understand more clearly why there is so much resistence.

Robin Snell, March 23rd 1988.

POSTSCRIPT

I close with a summary of the discussion that followed after I had presented the main body of my paper.

Further Features of Closedness in Workplace Learning Environments

Four other features of workplaces were claimed to be common:

A lack of interest in what happens in other parts of the workplace. People in one office may have drawn on new technology to make many useful changes; potentially their experiences would inform changes organization-wide. But there is little interaction between departments.

Closedness in workplace learning environments breeds further closedness. People who feel unprepared for challenges will set out, as a 'coping strategy' to minimise pain. Rather than expose their feelings they will put on a 'work mask',

People holding power often see little advantage in promoting wider workplace learning. Someone who wants there to be openness in learning at the age of eighteen may no longer see the point of such measures when they are thirty-five. As a first line manager someone may want the workplace culture to be more open, but can readily change their mind on reaching a more senior position.

Little value, whether for its own sake or as a means to an end, is explicitly attached to one's workplace learning. It is not often thought about. Young people do not refer to their life experiences as sources of learning until prompted. There is more immediate concern with qualifications, which are something tangible to offer as credentials.

Possible Responses to Challenges Posed by Barriers

If it is recognised that workplace learning environments are characterised by 'closedness', educators may respond in a number of possible ways.

1. Accepting the Status Quo
Some may argue that there is no point in treating closedness as a problem to tackle. Their views include: closedness in learning is a mechanism without which organizations cannot operate.

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a prime task of management is to provide structure and certainty.

spreading knowledge causes turmoil and uncertainty. knowledge must be rationed in order to avoid trouble.

there is general apathy about the matter; people are more concerned about longer holidays and the possibility of a four day week.

nothing short of a revolutionary approach would change the status quo and its shortcomings are not felt sufficiently strongly to warrant such action.

But does the evidence justify these conclusions? Why assume that greater openness in workplace learning would necessarily lead to conflict? Why assume that life outside work is any better than life within it? Why assume that people wouldn't be attracted to a different state of affairs?

2. Opportunism

Some may recommend looking for 'cracks in the wall'. They would treat organizational and personal crises as opportunities to build on. Characteristic views include:

Individuals are receptive to development when they realise something has badly gone wrong. Getting them to consider what went wrong and why, can be the beginning of a long term interest in development.

Organisations have adopted concepts of 'learning culture' when forced to by the threat of technological advances elsewhere or financial crisis. Examples given were British Aerospace and Jaguar.

Against this one can argue that in local authorities financial crisis has led instead to 'siege culture'; that pressures such as competitive tendering threaten the total loss of service, rather than promise the development of people. One may claim that public service organizations are exceptionally difficult to change because of their authority structure. But surely private sector organiaations can be just as tied up in knots when it comes to dealing with crises?

3. Building on Piecemeal Success

One may claim that various isolated efforts to promote a different view of the workplace in the long run add up to significant cultural change. for example:

One can introduce 'life experience' records into courses - something like this is done on Certificate in Management Studies courses.

YTS may be changing the view of work environments. The idea is emerging that the workplace is where you learn skills that are needed. There may be a long-term impact on how people see work.

The weakness of the piecemeal approach is that it leaves the mainstream problems of learning environments untouched. Formally documenting life experience can marginalise it by turning it into just another subject. Separately, isolated attempts may not generate sufficient momentum to sustain themselves, let alone generate change.

4. Tackling Barriers Head on as a Deep - Seated Social Problem

This approach entails treating closedness in workplace to be tackled as a whole. Ingredients of a concerted 'culture change' effort in an organization would involve, for example:

Dealing explicitly in philosophy. One would promote the view that people should accept failure as natural and only repeated failure to be a problem, One would encourage openness in feelings and experience. One would encourage the belief that the person can make a contribution to the common good and be valued for it.

Linking openness in learning to reward systems.

One objection to this approach is that it can damage individuals by forcing them through the 'walls' that have protected them, Another objection is that if there are competing philosophies within a company, then there is no cohesive basis upon which to move forward.

One might therefore set out to soften this approach. Representatives of professions and Trade Unions may be consulted to see if there is common ground between their views and those of management with respect to measures for increasing the openness of the workplace learning environment. A consensual underpinning to such activities as quality circles gives them a stronger chance of becoming permanent rather than ephemeral.

5. Building on Congenial Elements of Workplace Cultures

This approach entails drawing out what is already there, dormant or underused. Our culture is the set of values that people are indoctrinated into. These values can block some practices, but can also be the springboard for new practices. There is a need to understand the culture in order that one may build on its submerged strengths to make the learning environment more open, for example:

Stereotypical 'male' styles of management entail going for certainty, being socially competitive and 'strong'. These values predominate at the moment. One might set out to encourage more 'female' managerial styles entailling a recognition of ambiguity and the need for openness. Most people, male or female, have within them the capacity for this approach, although at the moment it may for most people be only a 'shadow' of their character.

Thanks to all who attended for encouragement and participation. Discussion and, above all, practice, must continue.

FACILITATION IN LEARNER CENTRED PROGRAMMES: A SELF-MANAGED LEARNING PERSPECTIVE ON CO-SET ADVISING

Jo Cooper and Andre Mailer

Learning can be opened up in a variety of ways. In this paper we explore the implications of a particular approach to facilitating learning groups involving two facilitators - a staff member and a present or past course member.

This paper is based upon our experience of working together as 'set adviser' and 'co-set adviser' on the two year Post Graduate Diploma in Management by Self Managed Learning (SML). This programme has been running at North East London Polytechnic since 1980. Andre is a member of the polytechnic staff and has been involved in the programme since its inception; Jo was a course member from 1984-86 and has been a co-set adviser with Andre since 1985. We have completed working with a first set together and are currently nearing the end of the first year with a second.

The SML course provides a tutorial and peer framework for managers to identify their learning needs and to seek to meet them by devising their own programme of study. Course members have to form a 'set' with about five other course members, a staff member (the 'set adviser'), and often a second year or past course member (the 'co-set adviser'). Sets are formed on the basis of mutual agreement between members and meet regularly during the two years of the course. Course members are not required to attend any lectures although polytechnic resources, including lectures from other management programmes, are available to them.

The manager takes responsibility for her/his own learning and the course members in the set act as 'consultant' to their peers. Each manager's programme of study is negotiated with the set and finally a 'learning contract' is agreed; this is usually grounded in the manager's own organisational world. Assessment is consistent with the principles of the programme being based on self and peer assessment. The set advisers take part in the process in the same way as other set members although the set adviser has a statutory responsibility in terms of polytechnic requirements.

The set provides a learning support group where the learning contract (and other relevant issues) are discussed. The main functions of the set include:

1. helping each other to produce learning contracts;
2. agreeing the contracts;
3. mutual sharing of learning and development;
4. giving feedback;
5. confrontation of set members who seem not to be 'producing' on contract issues;
6. mutual support especially for members who are 'taking risks'.
7. assessing progress towards contract completion;
8. final assessment at the end of the programme.

The learning contract usually combines work-related issues and topics, for example finance, computer applications and management, development of work related skills, (such as interviewing, negotiating and team-building), together with areas of personal development such as assertiveness and time- management.

The greater part of time within the set meetings is used by individual set members taking time to work on their contract issues. Some time is also spent by the set working together as a group on matters of mutual concern. This is particularly likely, for example, in the early stages of the course when course members are exploring the way in which a set functions, and at later stages when the set has to agree its own assessment criteria.

The issues considered in a set meeting are summarised in Figure 1.

Within the SML process the set adviser may at different times take on one of a number of roles. The North East London Polytechnic SML Course Document (July 1987), written by the course team of set advisers, suggests that the set adviser takes the following roles:

1. The *Traditional Expert Consultant* role of telling the set member the solution to her/his problem.

2. The *Traditional Expert Teacher* role of telling the set member problem solving procedures with which s/he can work out her/his own specific task solutions.

3. The *Internal Process Consultant* role of making interventions intended to help the participants deal with inter-personal processes that may get in the way of working on the task in either the set or the work situation.

4. The *Learning Process Manager* role of structuring and managing a learning process or situation in which set members invent, try out, and evaluate some task solving processes for themselves.

5. The *Self Development Facilitator* role of encouraging set members to reflect upon their own problems of behaviour, develop an ability to question their own assumptions, values and attitudes and become aware of alternative ways of behaving. This is an intra-personal process which enables set members to learn how to develop themselves (ie learn how to learn).

There is a more detailed discussion of facilitator roles in Burgoyne and Cunningham (1980).

Apart from the statutory requirements of the polytechnic the co- set adviser can potentially fulfil any of the roles carried out within the set by the staff member acting as set adviser. In addition, a second year, or past course member, can give information about the course from her/his experience as a participant, which is a different perspective from that of most staff members.

Co-set advising is also of benefit to the person acting as co-set adviser; in fact, it is this aspect which in the past has seemed to receive greatest emphasis. For example, at a recent meeting of staff set advisers and co-set advisers, there was a discussion about co-set advising. The meeting brainstormed the advantages/pay offs of co-set advising for both adviser and co-adviser (advantages for set members were not discussed on this occasion). Lists were produced which included the following:-

Advantages/pay offs of co-set advising

Use for 'personal' learning;
Developing facilitating skills;
Apprenticeship;
Gaining transferable skills;
Experiencing different set adviser styles;
Trying out different approaches/roles; feedback from the set on facilitation skills;
Learning from the learning of set members; Satisfaction of acknowledging ability to contribute to others' learning.

Benefits of co-set advising to staff member

Having someone to share process/set feedback; Being able to check out/challenge each other; Working with someone from a different sector/with a different perspective;
Working with someone who has done the course.

It was interesting to see that there were thought to be more than twice as many advantages for the co-set adviser as for the 'staff' set adviser. From our experience of working together we would suggest that there are also considerable advantages to the set members.

Our approach to co-set advising is rooted in our different backgrounds and perspectives: Andre as a polytechnic staff member and set adviser; Jo as a manager and co-set adviser. We have set out our perceptions of the development of our co-advising partnership in Figure 2.

In the four years since Jo first started the SML course Andre has been a staff member and has been set-adviser to other sets as well as the two in which we have worked together. During this time he has consolidated his set adviser style. Jo came onto the SML course as a practising manager but knowing that she worked by intuition rather than from a theoretical knowledge of 'management' . She therefore used the course to gain this theoretical base and to develop her management skills, including facilitating. In the last four years, therefore, Jo has in her own perception progressed from being an 'intuitive' manager to being a 'qualified' manager and at the same time from being an 'apprentice' set adviser to being an established co-adviser.

This perspective is significant in that it has provided the base from which Jo has made her contribution as a co-set adviser at various stages. It is a personal view and would not necessarily apply to other co-set advisers. In some cases, for example, course members who are already trainers become co-set advisers and they would be likely to perceive their development differently. In our work together, especially during the last year, we have emphasised Jo's contribution from the perspective of a practising manager, and the model on which we are working is that of co-facilitation when the facilitators are themselves from different backgrounds.

In our analysis of the way in which we work together we have developed a model (Figure 3) which shows the different ways in which co-advisers might work together with approaches ranging from the controlling to the collaborative. We have developed a collaborative style as featured on the right-hand side of Figure 3. That is not to say that we do not at times move towards the ineffective controlling style but the application of this model heightens our awareness of those instances and prompts us to improve the way we work together.

By working in a collaborative way from different perspectives we are able to offer a variety of approaches which would not be possible for a set adviser working alone. Whilst our contributions within the set are different, we are careful to ensure that they emphasise the positive aspects as shown on the right hand side of Figure 3. Where we do not share a particular view, we present a contrasting view which enables set members to come to their own conclusions. In this way we are able to model a particular way of working together which may in itself be helpful to some course members in their own work.

When a set member takes the initiative within the set we both take a back-up role, thus demonstrating that we do not have priority as set advisers and that any set member can potentially fulfil the roles taken by set advisers.

In our analysis of the way we work together we have found Ed Schein's model of process consultation particularly helpful (Figure 4). This model proposes ten types of interventions, the first five being primarily client-centred, the next two interactive between client and helper, and the last three being helper centred. The types move from being primarily inquiry orientated toward diagnostic and finally confrontive.

We have both practised and developed our active listening skills which are a prerequisite in set advising (to each other as well as to set members) . When working together we tend towards working from different ends of Schein's scale: Andre's interventions being primarily client centred and Jo's tending towards the diagnostic and confrontive. This may reflect both different perspectives ie the trainer being more process orientated and the manager tending to focus more on content.

This is, however, primarily a way in which we feel comfortable working together. We are each able to work in all of these modes and do so when working in the set on our own.

Our experience suggests to us that the presence of two set advisers is of value to the set, as well as to each other. This is particularly so in the context of our intention to 'open up' learning. The presence of a co-adviser who is not a part of a formal educational establishment and who does not have a label as 'teacher' or 'trainer' models to set members that learning can be facilitated by people from all sorts of backgrounds. In the context of management the fact that a manager who is, or has recently been, in their own situation (as a course member) is able to co-set advise, models to them that they too can develop the necessary skills to use elsewhere and, perhaps more importantly, that their learning can be facilitated by people in other contexts. In this way experiences which may not previously have been identified as learning experiences may be perceived as such.

In our case we also feel that it is significant that we present different gender models - a male trainer and woman manager. We find it useful to challenge traditional stereotypes in that it is often Jo who tends to make the more traditionally 'male' diagnostic and content-orientated interventions. There are also occasions when we feel a particular intervention is better made either by a man or a woman.

In this paper we have explored some of the implications of a particular approach to facilitation for further opening up learning in a variety of open learning situations. It is inherent in this model that learning need not be facilitated only by a formal teacher or trainer; a learner can facilitate learning too.

We would emphasise, however, that co-facilitating requires the acquisition and development of relevant skills but we do not believe that either academic qualifications or a behavioural science background are a necessary pre-requisite. It is most important that the learner is committed to developing her/his skills over a period of time and that both learner and set adviser are committed to working together. If the co-advisers are not able to work well together the process may not be successful.

We have identified a number of issues which we have not discussed in this paper including, for example, the implications in terms of power of a staff member and learner working together, issues around gender and the way in which myths are evolving around this way of working. We shall be giving more detailed consideration to these and other issues in another paper.

The ideas which we have expressed in this paper have developed from our attempts to summarise our experience and to further our understanding. We hope that they may also be helpful to other people who are interested in opening up learning particularly in the context of SML or other learner-centred programmes.

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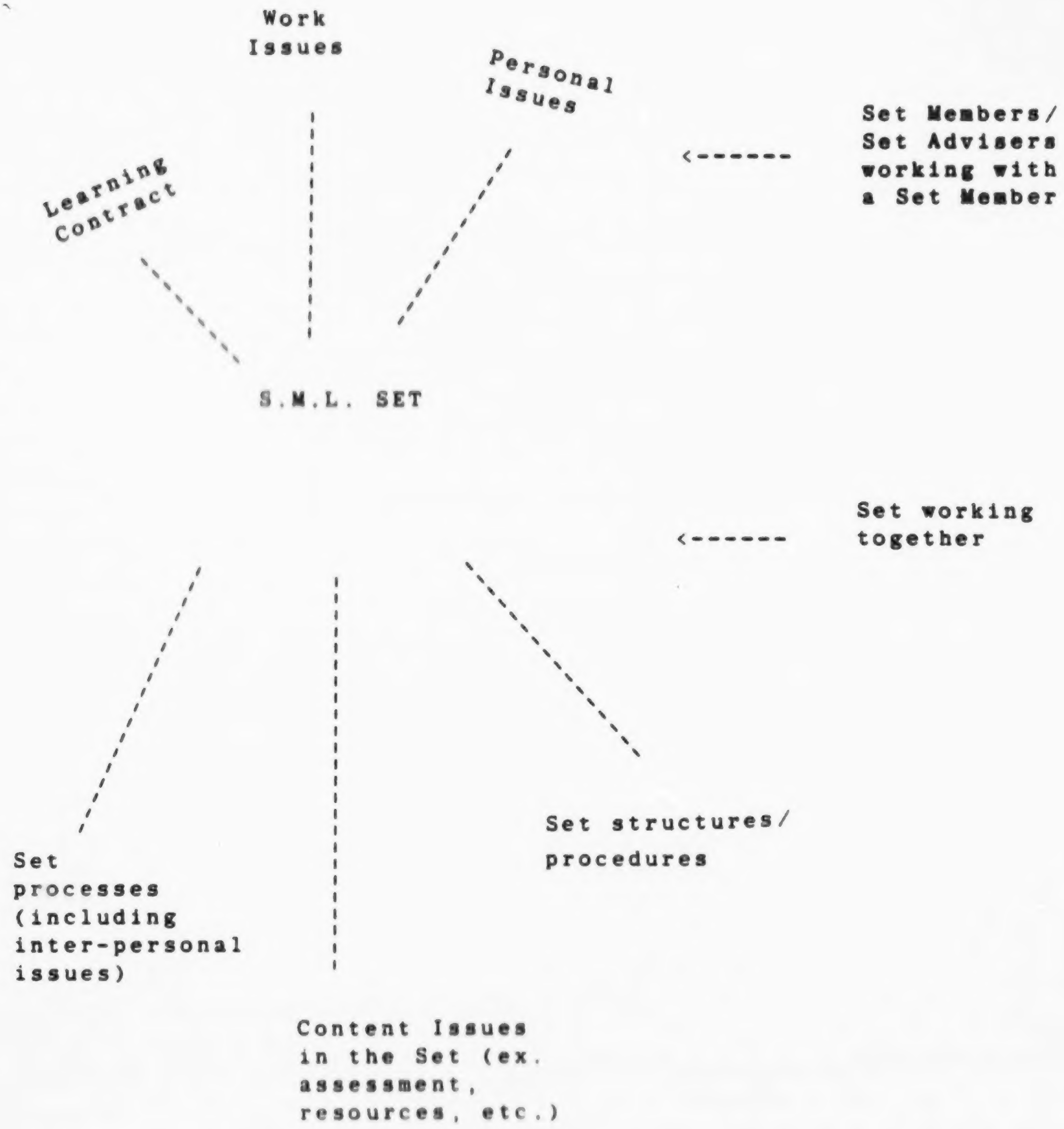
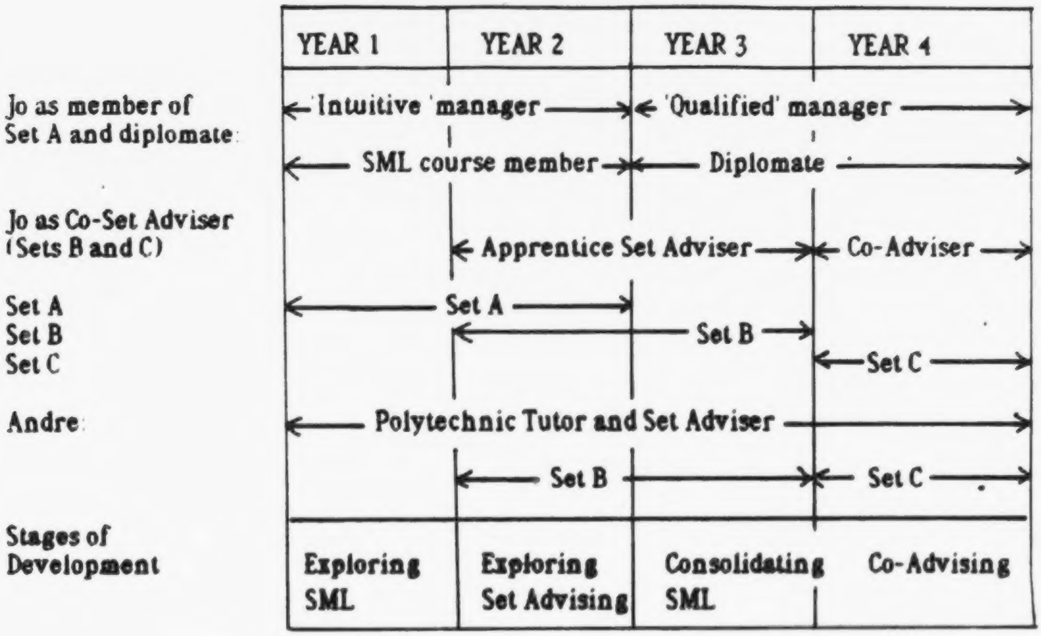
ISSUES CONSIDERED IN A P.G. DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT (BY SML) SET


Work Issues
Personal Issues
Learning Contract
Set Members/ Set Advisers working with a Set Member
S.M.L. SET
Set working together
Set processes (including inter-personal issues)
Set structures/ procedures
Content Issues in the Set (ex. assessment, resources, etc.)

PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT


YEAR 1
YEAR 2
YEAR 3
YEAR 4
Jo as member of Set A and diplomate
Intuitive 'manager
'Qualified' manager
SML course member
Diplomate
Jo as Co-Set Adviser (Sets B and C)
Apprentice Set Adviser
Co-Adviser
Set A
Set B
Set C
Set A
Set B
Set C
Andre
Polytechnic Tutor and Set Adviser
Set B
Set C
Stages of Development
Exploring SML
Exploring Set Advising
Consolidating SML
Co-Advising

INTERVENTIONS IN CO-SET ADVISING : MODES OF WORKING

CONTROLLING style	COLLABORATIVE style
Overlapping-overkilling	Complementary
Opposing	Contrasting
Dismissive	Reinforcing/ Building
Interfering (by Co-Set Adviser in secondary role)	Initiating (Primary role)/Supporting (secondary role)
Not allowing space to Set members by either/or both Set adviser	Initiating by Set members (both Set advisers backing-up role)
INEFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE

PREPARING A STUDY GUIDE TO A COURSE TEXT BOOK

Alison Baker

I BACKGROUND

This paper examines one way of adding a degree of openness to more traditional, structured forms of learning. Students can be offered some support for independent study by preparing study-guides to suitable text-books. This is normally quicker and cheaper than writing complete self-study materials and study-guides can be incorporated into a range of different learning contexts.

This paper describes the preparation of a study-guide to accompany a textbook for a course in industrial sociology for business studies degree students. The study-guide was written as part of a much wider project, namely the preparation of materials for a business studies degree by distance learning. The project was supported by a grant from the CNAA Development Fund and carried out by a team drawn from several Polytechnics and Colleges. The grant was awarded with the stipulation that the project team explored the feasibility of adapting existing materials rather than preparing new ones. Thus the project started out by evaluating the self-study materials which were already available in sociology. None was sufficiently vocational for business studies students and so the decision was taken to convert a text-book into a format which could be used on a distance learning course.

Although the study-guide was prepared with business studies students in mind the issues raised in producing it and the lessons learned from the exercise have wider applicability.

II USE OF A STUDY-GUIDE

Study guides may be used to add openness or flexibility to a number of teaching and learning contexts. The provision of a study-guide may encourage students to read for themselves a text which would otherwise be intimidating or overwhelming. Students with little previous experience of academic work or who for any reason lack confidence in their ability to study may be supported by a guide to some of their course material. Some students simply prefer to work by themselves rather than attend classes and the provision of a study-guide may cater for their learning needs which might otherwise be ignored on a conventionally taught course.

A study-guide, as other self-study materials, is not necessarily an alternative to classroom teaching but can act as an adjunct to it. In some disciplines classroom teaching is used mainly to present knowledge and rehearse material which is available in the library. If students can be led through this literature by a study-guide, then classroom time is released for discussion and debate and more participative forms of learning.

Administrative constraints increasingly lead to a reduction in the element of optionality in courses. Small groups studying a specialist option are too expensive to maintain. Resource-based learning materials of various forms may be used to retain some student choice in courses and allow students to follow options without making heavy demands on staff time.

The difficulty and costs of preparing a good study-guide should not be underestimated. However, teaching staff can prepare such guides without the need for extensive research and collation of material. Texts which are already familiar to the teacher may be used as the basis for the study-guide and thus, as Noble (1980) suggests, preparation of the study-guide becomes little more than a form of course development .

III SELECTING THE TEXT

In many instances the question of which text to use as the basis of the study-guide will not arise because the guide will be written for a book which is already part of a course. In the project reported here no obvious text presented itself so it was necessary to draw up criteria for selection. These needed to take into account the suitability of the book for individual study as well as the academic objectives of the course.

It was surprisingly difficult to meet both types of criteria. The book was to be used as the main vehicle for enabling the student to acquire the knowledge and understanding pertinent to that unit of the course. However, it was necessary to come to terms with the fact that no single text fully matched our ideas of what the course should include. We had to learn to be more flexible in respect of the academic content of the course, and to achieve a balance between subject-related objectives for the course and student-related objectives.

Our criteria for a self-study text included clear and attractive presentation, an accessible, user-friendly style and a method of organising content which would enable it to be broken down into short but coherent sections.

There were also a number of practical criteria which governed the selection of the text. In the first place, the book needed to be currently in print, likely to remain so, and selling at a price which students could afford. Publishers were quite helpful in giving information on their stocks and likely reprints. However, the increasingly reduced shelf-life of text books (McDougall, Lee, Bibby, 1987) may make it less feasible in the future to produce study-guides for current texts.
Another practical consideration was whether the text was stocked on a regular basis by retailers or publishers. Some American texts, for example, are only available irregularly in Britain. Booksellers may be able to advise on whether they can obtain reliable supplies of a book and feedback on student experiences of buying texts is also valuable.

It was also necessary to consider whether the text would become rapidly outdated and to what extent the study-guide could be used to compensate for any out-of-date material. In practice, as far as this subject was concerned, this meant that a text with a high proportion of empirical material, particularly statistical data, would be less suitable than one with a stronger conceptual orientation. This latter kind of text could be supported with current empirical examples in the study-guide and these could be replaced with more recent material when necessary.

In addition, we thought it important that the text should not be dominated by a single ideological position. In the event it was not possible to find a text which met all these criteria and we had to resort to a book which, whilst taking a single theoretical perspective, at least made this explicit to the reader. This had been of concern because the text would be used on a distance learning course where students would have limited opportunities for discussing the ideas in the text with a tutor or with other students. We did not want the students to come to accept a particular perspective simply because they had not been offered any alternatives and nor did we want to generate student resistance to the text because it presented only ideas which they might reject. If the text had been intended for use as part of a wider resource-based learning system, or if it were intended to be a support for classroom teaching this issue of ideology would have seemed less important.

The criteria for selecting a text as the basis of the study-guide will vary from one discipline to another. In some subjects the issue of up-dating, for example, will be less significant. In some subjects there are a number of texts on the market which are designed for self-study and include such features as self- assessment exercises. Producing a study-guide for such a book might be simpler than using a more conventional text.

The role which the study-guide will play on a course will also affect the selection of the text, If the study guide is to be prepared to help students with general background reading, for example, then library holdings will be just as suitable as texts available from booksellers. In selecting any text, however, there has to be a balance between academic and pedagogic criteria. (1)

IV THE AIMS OF THE STUDY GUIDE

The main purpose of the study-guide in this project was to make the text more comprehensible and accessible so that the student could acquire the knowledge and skills needed to complete that part of the course. As the study-guide was intended for first year students it was hoped that it would help the student to become an independent learner and enable him or her to tackle subsequent course units with greater confidence.

The aims and purpose of the study-guide were therefore a little different from those of the course, as represented through the text. The course objectives were phrased in terms of academic content and intellectual skills and these were reproduced in the study-guide and also influenced the way the study-guide was constructed.

The learning objectives of the students following the course could be anticipated only in broad terms. One of the difficulties of constructing the study guide was to take into account the individual learning objectives of students . Part-time business studies students, for whom the study-guide was intended in the first place, tend to vary considerably in their work experience, study skills and expectations of the course. A distance learning programme based on a single text does not readily offer the flexibility needed to respond to this variation among students and our response to this problem was only a superficial one. The particular text we had chosen did not lend itself to the provision of alternative routes through it, nor to many options among its contents . Although we were able to suggest that some sections might be read in more or less depth according to the student's time and interest, and we provided different types of self-assessment exercises, we were not able to cater satisfactorily for a variety of student learning objectives. In retrospect this problem should have been confronted when we selected the text which was the basis of the study-guide. However, it also suggests that course units based around a single text may be unsatisfactory in this respect.

V THE NATURE OF THE STUDY GUIDE

Writing a study-guide encourages reflection on the nature and format of a textbook, and its deficiencies as study material. The text book was basically what England (1987) calls content-oriented in that its vocabulary, presentation and general approach were focused around the main theme of the book. The study-guide had to balance this content-orientation with a learner-orientation.

Among the features of the study-guide which would make the text more user-friendly was the division of the text into more meaningful and manageable study units. The chapters in the book were of uneven length and difficulty, representing academic divisions rather than learning arrangements. Our task was to maintain the academic coherence of the text whilst dividing it into units which could be tackled by students at a single sitting. We aimed for sections which would take about an hour to complete, although it was difficult to estimate students' study pace. This process was accompanied by provision of a clear overview of the text from the point of view of the student new to the subject . Neither the introduction nor conclusion of the text accomplished this.

The text book assumed that the reader was familiar with an academic style of presentation; it even contained the occasional outburst of Latin! The study-guide needed to help the student develop an academic approach rather than taking it for granted from the outset. In addition, the study-guide needed to provide opportunities for students to test their learning achievements and receive feed-back on their progress.

The study-guide also included a short, annotated bibliography. This was to enable students to select background reading for their own use. The references in the text-book served a quite different purpose and could not be used as a guide to additional study material.

The text book was written, it appeared, for readers who were interested in its theme and motivated to read it. Students following a course of study may not necessarily have this interest in every module or each piece of reading. The study- guide had to be designed to arouse interest. The material in the text book had to be related to issues which might be stimulating and relevant to the students and a set of learning objectives were required so that the students could be aware of how the book fitted into the course. It was also intended to encourage the students to relate the material to their own experience, to interpret it in their own terms, and, importantly, to criticise it. Self-assessment exercises were the main vehicle for prompting the student to actively engage with the text.

The development of a critical attitude was fostered by including in the study-guide some extracts from other authors. Permission to use these extracts had to be obtained from the copyright holders but this, surprisingly, presented little difficulty. The use of these supplementary readings was intended to provide the students with experience of different styles and perspectives within the framework of the text. The readings helped to place the text in a wider context. Had the chosen text been a collection of readings by different authors these additional extracts might not have been necessary for this purpose. The readings were also used to cover topics which were not addressed in the text but which were important to the course for which the study-guide was being prepared.

The supplementary readings helped to balance the conceptual, theoretical perspective of the text with empirical examples and statistical data. They were incorporated into the guide as discrete sections, with their own introductions and self- assessment exercises so that they could be removed and replaced with more up-to-date material as appropriate. It was hoped this would prolong the useful life of the study-guide.

In examining the text from a student's point of view it became apparent that, whilst as readers we could capture the general meaning of a passage, we often had difficulty in explaining it in detail. Students new to the subject could be expected to find this an even greater problem. This led us to reflect on the task which we set students when, in conventional courses, we simply present them with a reading list and leave them to struggle on their own with general background reading.

VI ISSUES IN WRITING A STUDY GUIDE

In preparing the study-guide we became conscious of a number of problems which we were not always able to solve successfully. Having divided the text into what we hoped were manageable sections we wrote an introduction to each section. This acted as a guide to the most important points and led the student through the more complicated arguments. In doing this, however, we were implicitly placing our own interpretation on the text. We had to consider whether we should let the students form their own impression of the material before offering them ours. There was also the possibility that the students would read the introduction as a substitute for reading the text. Whilst this possibility gave some optionality to the course, we felt that it was not a constructive optionality. If we had been using a text which was easier to read we might have been able to provide the student with a summary and commentary at the end of each section, but in this case we thought this was unfeasible.

Dividing the text into sections inevitably fragmented the text and made it more difficult for students to grasp the main themes and arguments running through it. This was compensated for by frequent references back into the text and, less frequent, references forward. A revision section which drew together the main themes was included and self-assessment exercises were used to encourage students to think across sections rather than regard them as discrete study packages.

One of the major concerns in writing the study-guide was to ensure that the students developed a critical perspective on the text. However we experienced a tension between wishing to encourage a sceptical approach whilst not wanting students to lose confidence in the text as their basic course material. Nor did we wish to confuse the students by introducing too many alternative arguments. We were basically facing the issue of how to develop an academic perspective on course material without having the opportunity to engage in an extended dialogue with the students. It generally seemed best to allow the students to develop their own critique while suggesting a framework in which this might occur.

Another important issue was that of relating the learning material to the students' own experience. Although the course was concerned with work and industry not all the students would be in paid employment and some would have no recent experience of work outside the home. We devised a number of self-assessment exercises which encouraged students to relate the course content to work situations which they might have observed through shopping, travelling, taking children to school and so forth, rather than using examples of paid employment only.

The self-assessment exercises were an important feature of the study-guide. Each section was followed by two questions or exercises. One of these was intended to provide feed-back on comprehension. It asked the student to comment on, or summarise, or carry out some exercise on part of the text. The answer was usually a restatement of the relevant part of the text in what we hoped was a clearer style. The second self-assessment question was designed to encourage criticism, relational thinking or linking the course material with other issues or experiences. The answers to these questions were expressed very tentatively as illustrations of the way the students might have responded. In some cases two quite different types of answer were illustrated but these made the study-guide rather long and we felt that this increased the reading load on the student. Writing these answers also raised the issue of how the student would use them as a source of feed-back. We emphasised that the models were only suggested answers but we had no idea by what criteria the students would judge whether their own answers were sufficiently similar to be acceptable, or whether they were so different as to indicate misunderstanding.

VII PILOTING THE STUDY GUIDE

Although experienced teachers will be able to anticipate many of the difficulties which students are likely to find in a text they can never completely shed the understanding and study skills which they have acquired and put themselves in the position of the students. Although the guide will be subject to informal evaluation on the various occasions on which it is used, it is desirable that, like other open-learning materials, it should be formally tested on a pilot basis.

Ideally a random sample of students should be used for the test. However, as the pilot students will be volunteers they are not necessarily a random group. In the project described in this paper students taking a classroom-based part-time degree in business studies were invited to follow the module in industrial sociology by using the study-guide. This group became the pilot group. As they were following the course in a different mode of delivery to other students they developed a sense of receiving special treatment. Whilst this might have been educationally desirable it raised the possibilities of a "Hawthorne effect" (2) on the evaluation of the use of the study-guide.

The pilot testing of the study-guide on the part-time business studies degree was also a test of the feasibility of running the degree in this mode of delivery. The students were invited to attend tutorials, given details of the arrangements for telephone and postal contact and were expected to submit written assignments and eventually take an exam. As this is only one way of using a study-guide, only the aspects of the pilot which relate to the structure and content of the study-guide are reported here.

At the end of the unit the pilot students were asked to complete a questionnaire. This had the disadvantage that memories of the early part of the study-guide would have been hazier than those of the end of the guide. The second time the study guide was used the questionnaire was also administered in the middle of the course so that some students who did not complete the unit were involved in the evaluation. The questionnaire covered various aspects of the content and use of the study-guide. It had a fairly light-hearted style and contained both pre-coded and open- ended questions. It was completed anonymously but as the number of pilot students was small they may have thought that their answers could be identified.

The use of the questionnaire was disappointing and suggests that a different form of evaluation should have been used. The results indicated general satisfaction with the guide but they were not convincing. The students ignored the opportunities for qualitative comment and ticked the pre-coded responses which were favourable to the study-guide with monotonous regularity. Little weight could be given to this evaluation process. On reflection it might have been preferable to ask students to use the study- guide as an aid to background reading or for revision purposes or to find some similar way of piloting its use on a non-assessed basis. It might also have been preferable to interview the students about their use of the study-guide rather than rely on a questionnaire. This rather unsatisfactory experience raised the whole question of what can reasonably be expected of students, particularly first year students, in criticising course material. Whilst recognising the need to canvass the students' views it is also necessary to face the problem of asking the students to assume what is in effect the teacher's role and identify deficiencies in the course.

VIII CONCLUSIONS

Writing a study-guide to a text-book is a challenge. It demands careful reflection on the way in which we expect students to use text-books and the sort of learning outcomes which we wish them to achieve. Writing the study-guide engages the teacher in a process of critical self-reflection and this in itself is a valuable experience.

The study-guide is a form of self-study material which has a variety of uses and can be flexibly incorporated into different types of teaching arrangements. A study guide can be produced more quickly and cheaply than a complete self-study package and writing a guide can be a useful introduction to preparing open learning materials. A study-guide can be produced in such a way that it can be fairly easily up-dated or adapted for a different course.

Writing a study-guide as a member of a team rather than as an individual is to be recommended. The need to explain and justify the content of the study-guide to one's peers is a valuable self- discipline and collaboration in tackling problems of presentation is likely to lead to more satisfactory solutions. The experience of preparing a study-guide also provides a new and more critical viewpoint of the textbooks which students are commonly expected to use without any guidance or learning support.

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Notes

* This paper describes developmental work carried out by the author and J. Barry of North East London Polytechnic, whose comments on the paper are gratefully acknowledged.

(l) The text selected as the basis for the study-guide was: Hill, S. (1981) Competition and Control at Work. Heinemann, London.

(2) The 'Hawthorne effect' is a term used to describe the effect on the behaviour of an experimental group of being especially selected and given different treatment during the course of a study. See, Roethlisberger, F.J. and Dickson, W.J. Management and the Worker, Harvard, 1939.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AND OPEN LEARNING

Michael Richardson

I was asked by the organisers to talk about the application of Open Learning to an aspect of Open University work perhaps less generally known - namely its Continuing Education Programme.

The Open University's work as a provider of under-graduate degree opportunities, is in general well-known. A recent GALLUP poll commissioned by the University suggested that awareness of this work far exceeds 90% although it was strange that only 40% of the respondents - a cross section of the adult population - realised that entry to the Open University degree programmes was genuinely open and without qualification. This level of awareness is perhaps not particularly surprising when you consider the volume and consistency of broadcast output publicly available both on television and radio. Additionally, the University now provides one in ten of the graduate output of all UK Universities each year and of that output last year incidentally, more than half were women. However, it is true to say that the primary beneficiary of the under-graduate programme has been the individual and that it has provided an avenue for individual self-realisation and development rather than a benefit to the community or the institutions within it. There are some significant exceptions, for example the use within the Associate Student Programme of a nunber of courses provided by the School of Education by local education authorities and teacher centres as a means of in-service training. It was not really until the development of the University's programme of Continuing Education that a means began to exist for the community and the institutions and organisations within it to make use of appropriate materials within the community, within the company, within the teaching or caring institution.

The Continuing Education programme which thus contributes more directly to the health, the well-being and the skills updating of the community is, paradoxically, required to be broadly self-financing. It is organised in six sectors of activity and within it last year, alongside the 67,000 people studying as under-graduates something over 70,000 people studied as short course students or became clients and users of resource material in the Continuing Education programme.

This afternoon, I should like to concentrate on four specific areas within the programme. First, on Community Education, and particularly on an example of good practice here in the Strathclyde Open Learning Experiment. We shall look at the Community Education area in some little detail and then move on to look at three case studies rather more briefly. First, the Open University as a National Managing Agent for the MSC's Community Programme. Second, the work of the Open Business School, our School of Management, and its relationship with its institutional consumers, and third the work of the Contract Training Unit. In doing this I have the advantage of drawing on the work of a number of colleagues which I am glad to acknowledge.

Community Education

Since 1977, there have been over half-a-million users of Community Education materials generated by the Open University. These include over 83,000 course registrations, 37,000 discussion packs distributed, and over 135,000 course book sales. As it is well-known that the majority of course purchasers discuss material and share the material with others in informal community groups the real figure is probably much higher and probably is nearer the million mark if one includes those who watch TV programmes either live or on video or via CEEFAX and those receiving material in adapted forms via serializations in newspapers and women's magazines.

Today, the overall aims of the Community Education programme are in brief:

1. to meet the learning needs of individuals at various stages in their lives in their roles as parents, consumers, employees and citizens, in the context of their family, workplace and in the community.

2. to reach as wide a range of learners as possible regardless of prior educational achievements through appropriate learning materials and support for their learning.

3. to collaborate with national and local organisations in defining needs, developing learning materials, sharing resources publicising and promoting learning opportunities, organising support for learners and evaluating their provision.

4. to finance this work within the rules laid-down by the University from student fees, external grants and other sources of income.

The individual independent learner was initially seen as the main end user of materials, but it was always anticipated that material would be adapted and used by others. This adaptation and use by professionals and community workers has in fact been much higher than anticipated and a range of support materials has been developed to facilitate this work.

Who has benefited from the programme?

- *Fee paying students:* The majority of fee paying students are women, although the proportion of men has increased with the widening range of courses available. The typical fee paying student is a housewife in her late twenties, she has more than the minimum level of educational qualifications, she tends to be new to the area she lives in, participates in adult education and reads the Guardian or Daily Telegraph.

- *Sponsored Place Students:* Key groups reached through sponsorship include those living in designated deprived areas, single parent families, childminders, parents under twenty-one years, first time pregnancies for mothers at risk, people under medical supervision for stress and anxiety, people facing redundancy or long term unemployment . The typical sponsored place student lives in a disadvantaged area, is younger than the fee paying student, had her first child at a young age, has a larger family and is more likely to be a single parent. She may have no educational qualifications and left school early and the course is likely to be her first experience of education since leaving school. She is likely to be a Daily Mirror or Sun Reader.

- *Informal students:* Most informal students are similar to sponsored place students. Special categories include disadvantaged and deprived groups, unmarried pregnant teenagers, ethnic minority groups, adult literacy groups, male and female prisoners and isolated mothers.

- *Professionals:* Use materials as a resource in their work with clients: Pediatricians, teachers, community outreach workers, 'Look After Yourself' (LfY) tutors, social workers, health visitors, home school link workers, health education officers and adult literacy workers.

- *Professionals and para-professionals:* A wide range use the course materials in their own studies, e.g. childminders, nursery nurses, NNEB students.

- *The general public:* As 'drop in' viewers and listeners, book buyers and magazine readers.

- *Local Projects:* Local education and health authorities have organised provision based on the learning materials.

The Strathclyde Open Learning Experiment

The Strathclyde Open Learning Experiment is a venture in an open learning working partnership between the two major institutions, a local authority and the Open University. The project was inspired by the prospect of advantage to each in the collaborative pursuit of common objectives to make community-based learning experiences more readily available to adults in areas of multiple social deprivation. Established in 1981, after several years of exploratory work, the scheme's initial objectives were concerned with co-operation and improving learner support systems and in the development of flexible use of material to suit varying needs. Originally a formal system of bringing together the key local authority departments social work and education in order to share experience, it has settled down after three or four years into a looser network of relationship embedded in the normal working pattern of both the departments concerned and in becoming an effective means of continued liaison and development. The scheme centres on the delivery of Open University community education materials into the local community through the agency of the social work department and through the education service supported by the extensive deployment of volunteers working alongside professionals. The key decision was not to impose even a token charge on the learners and these costs are met within the terms of the policies of positive discrimination within areas of priority treatment by the local authority or the Scottish Health Education Group, or in some cases supported by MSC Scotland. The success of the scheme has been not only numerical, although nearly 8,000 in the areas of priority treatment have studied at least one of the courses offered and obtained a certificate in so doing, since the establishment of so. Perhaps more important is the increase in confidence in the participants. This is evidenced by their willingness to go along the educational pathway to take another community education course, to enter further education, to come into the Open University 's Associate Student programme, or into the under-graduate programme itself. Sadly,it has not proved possible to replicate this scheme on a significant scale in any community south of the border. Of course, it has not been without its frustrations. One such relates to the problems endemic in securing a relationship between a number of large, complex and labyrinthine bureaucracies sometimes marching to different drums. Another has been the perceived reluctance of men to participate, but some progress is being made in this regard as the lessons learnt by S.O.U.L. are transferred into other areas of post compulsory provision and students there are offered a greater control over their learning through the use of this more open approach.

MSC COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Our next example is the involvement of the Open University as a national managing agent for the MSC's Community Programme. Following a successful experiment between 1980 and 1983, in the Open University South Region involving the appointment on 52 week MSC funded contracts of up to IOO Community Development Officers to work with unemployed people and groups in the Community on the basis of experience shared through Open University, community education and other appropriate Open University material, the University negotiated a National Agency. At its most vigorous, this national agency was running 40+ active projects had more than 350 community development officers in post, running 744 groups, supporting some 6,000 group and individual learners. This is a well documented and thoroughly monitored project and in justice demands a session to itself. Again, it is apparent that, quite apart from the numbers involved, the gains in confidence and a sense of involvement have been of substantial importance to the participants. More heartening still, the study of the first destination of those who completed work with the scheme showed a placement in work or full-time education of approximately twice the national average of community programme schemes. We very much hope to be able to build on the success and experience of this scheme, when the new arrangements which supersede the community programme come into place in September, but at the moment the new approach to the concept of community benefit in the revised scheme renders this unclear.

Examples of use of Open University materials in one project for one month

The following materials were used during one month with learners in a variety of groups.

114 people worked with Health Choices including: a womens group, young peoples' group, church group, probation service group, voluntary workers, youth club, mental health group, playgroup, Alateen group (Alcohol and Teenagers) and a 'Depression' group.

99 people worked with Parents and Teenagers including: groups of parents with children at middle and secondary schools, at an Adult Education Institute, a PTA, and with a Good Companions group also using Caring for Older People.

94 people worked with the Pre-School Child including: Mother and Toddler groups, a Ladies' group, a day nursery group and a childminding group. Members of one of the Mother and Toddler Groups, and the Childminding group are studying for assessment.

20 people worked with Childhood 5 - lO as members of a school PTA.

20 people worked with the Childminding pack in a childminders' group.

8 people worked with the First Years of Life as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award

20+ people worked with Healthy Eating including: people at a day centre, and a Women's Club. Material also used with groups alongside Health Choices and Pre-School Child.

20 people worked with Energy Matters in a National Housewives' Register group.

17 people with the Work Choices pack in a "workers'" group at a Rehabilitation Hostel, and with a Youth Centre Group.

18 people worked with Look After Yourself including: a group at a day centre, a Look After Yourself ladies' group, and a Look After Yourself creative writing group held at a blind couple's house.
6 people worked with Planning Retirement in a Planning Retirement group for professionals. The material was also used at an Adult Education Centre offering retirement courses.

Personal Interest Packs

8 people worked with Looking into Paintings in a flourishing group Local Authority funded for materials.

Health and Social Welfare

114 people worked with Caring for Older People including a volunteers'group, a carers' group run in collaboration with Social Services, and with a group of senior staff and deputies at a day centre. The latter group are studying to assessment. 48 people worked with Mental Handicap - 'Patterns for Living' including: a sub-group of a large mental handicap carers' group (plus handicapped), a mentally handicapped parents group, and a group of young adults including some people with a handicap.

Not included above are those learners in groups which used materials other than Open University Packs. These included a Career and Community Studies group, a Young Enterprise group, an Oral History group and those producing a talking newspaper for the blind. The diversity of the materials needed and their penetration within the community is encouraging.

I indicated earlier that we would make a brief mention of two other activities where Open University materials are in different ways involved within the Community rather than with individuals exclusively. The first of these is the work of the Open Business School. In the four years since its inception, a total of more than 18,500 managers have taken courses with the Open Business School. Of these students, something like two-thirds are known to be sponsored by their company and more than two-and-a-half thousand companies now regularly sponsor Open Business School students - many companies block booking students onto courses which fit in with their own in-company staff development programmes. In this way the needs of the students for a more portable qualification whether it be a diploma or an MBA can, to a measurable extent, be matched with the wish of the employer to seek specific improvements in managerial effectiveness - the flexible and modular advantages of Open Learning now being extensively used by the business community.

Our final example is the work of the Contract Training Unit of the University. Contract Training was initially developed in 1983 in response to the requirements in the electronic and engineering sector faced with the task of re-training staff to cope with the new generation of electronic devices and systems. The Contract Training Solution was seen as a way to offer industry a way of buying them the highest quality courses but having them tailored to specific company requirements with the continued support of a national organisation. Towards the end of 1985, after extensive discussion and evaluation, the MSC agreed to pump prime the Open University's Contract Training activities in order to accelerate their rate of growth. Essentially the components of Contract Training are:

1. a training needs analysis carried out by Open University staff in consultation with the training staff of the industry concerned.

2. the analysis of appropriate available existing Open University
materials and their re-packaging and/or extraction to meet the particular needs thrown up by the analysis.

3. the planning and delivery of a training experience in-company making use both of Open University full and part-time staff and of the company's own training resources both human and material.

The work of the Unit to date has covered provision from major electronic industries, manufacturing concerns, the services, educational institutions, local authorities and the Sports Council. Essentially, it is a question of a company having exactly what it requires for its own needs, not an off-the-shelf package, delivered when it needs it, where it wants it and by staff in whom it has confidence.

I think it will be seen that particurarly in the case of Community Education materials and their contribution to PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS - there is scope for useful complementary with Open Colleges focussed concentration upon vocational skills. I know Richard will have more to say on that.

Finally, as I indicated, I should like to offer some questions against which we can test the openness of open learning offerings in the community on a continuum from closed to open. The scheme which I offer is that developed by Roger Lewis writing in Open Learning in 1986 in an article entitled "Wnat is Open Learning?" more recently quoted in "Open Learning for Adults" edited by Mary Thorpe and David Grugeon and published last year by Longman.

MER/JMP March 1988

The OU Continuing Education Programme

Scientific and Technical Updating Programme

The Open Business School
(School of Management)

The Health and Social Welfare Programme

The Professional Development in Education Programme

The Community Education Programme

The Personal and Cultural Education Programme

[The Contract Training Unit]

Case Studies

Community Education
(including The Strathclyde Open Learning Experimen
— SOLE)

The OU as a National Managing Agent
for the MSC's Community Programme

The Open Business School
(School of Management)

The Contract Training Unit

Community Education Resources

Resource areas

The First Years of Life
(Living with Babies and Toddlers)

The Pre-School Child

Health Choices

Childhood 5-10

Parents and Teenagers

Planning Retirement

Pregnancy and Birth

Healthy Eating

Racism

Co-operative /working

Work Choices

Action Planning

Who has benefitted?

Fee paying students

Sponsored place students

Informal students

Professionals

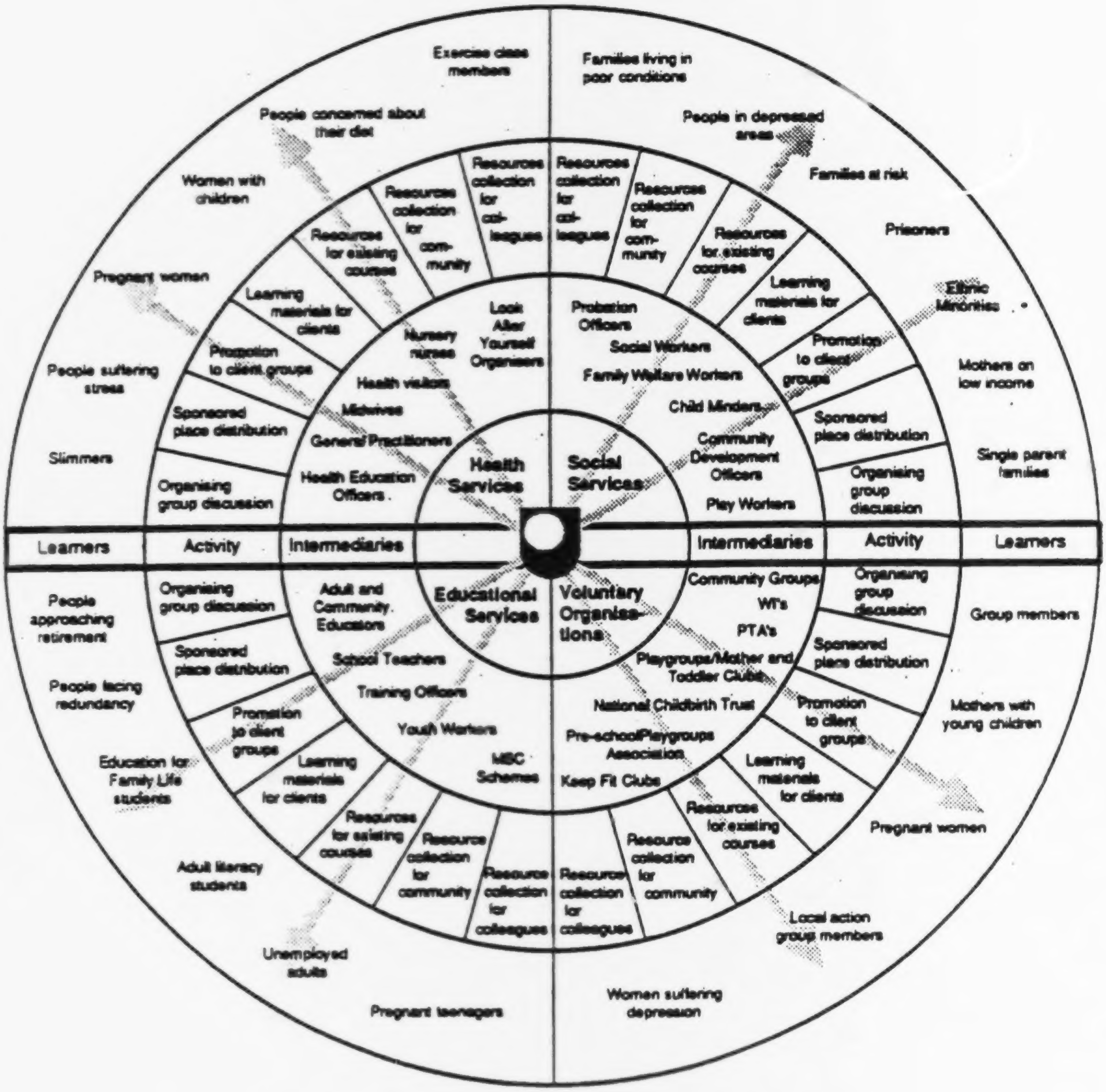
Professionals and para-professionals

General public

Local projects

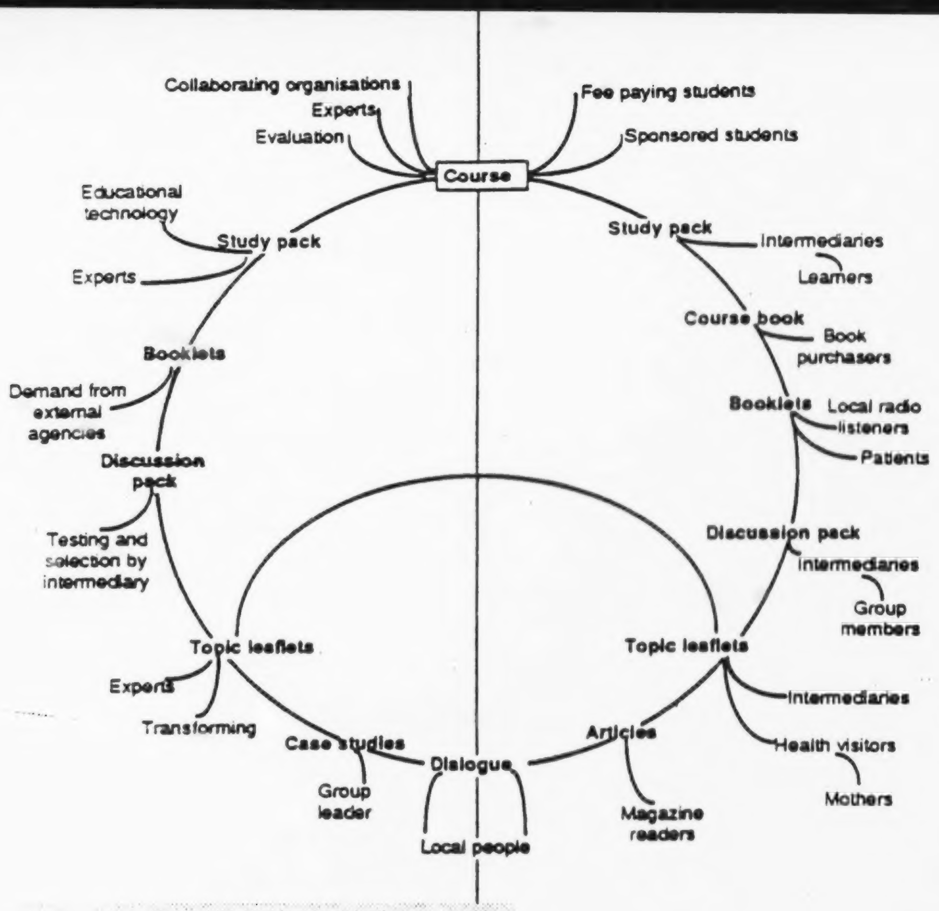
Available as

Courses Study Packs Discussion Packs Course Books	with	Assessment Packs Videocassettes Support Materials

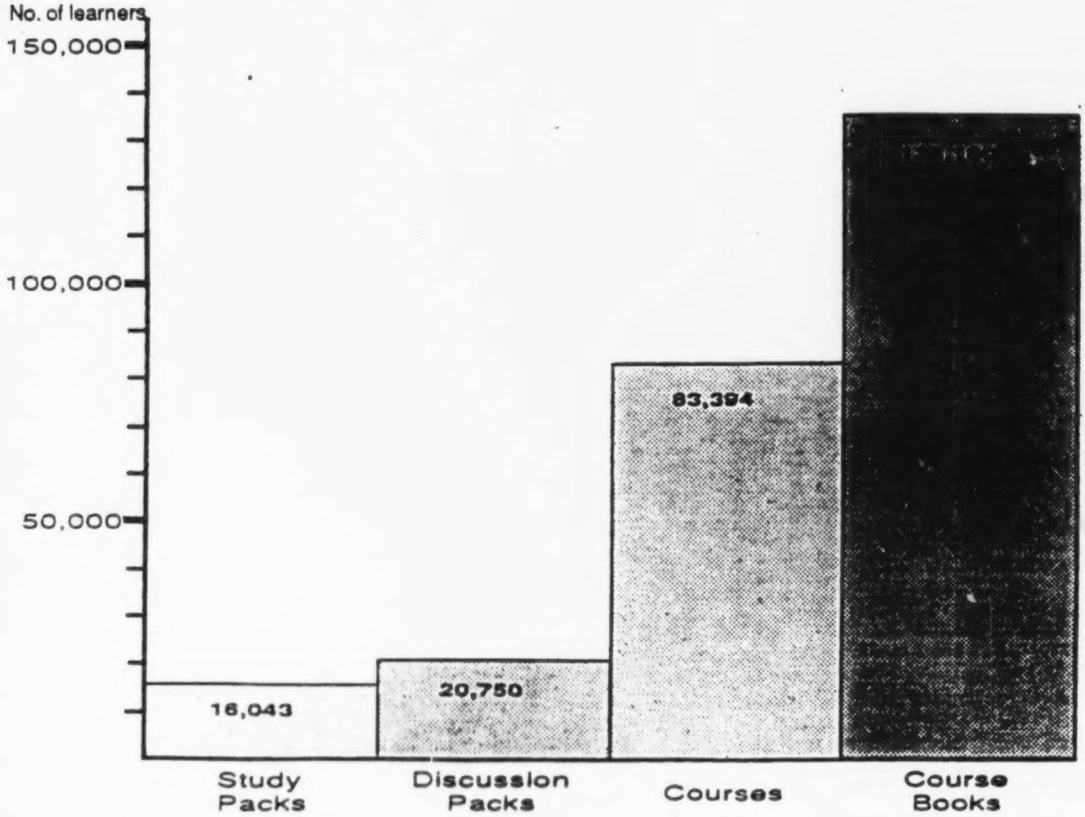


Health Services
Social Services
Educational Services
Voluntary Organisations
Learners
Activity
Intermediaries
Intermediaries
Activity
Learners
Look After Yourself Organisers
Nursery nurses
Health visitors
Midwives
General Practitioners
Health Education Officers
Resources collection for colleagues
Resources collection for community
Resources for existing courses
Learning materials for clients
Promotion to client groups
Sponsored place distribution
Organising group discussion
Exercise class members
People concerned about their diet
Women with children
Pregnant women
People suffering stress
Slimmers
Probation Officers
Social Workers
Family Welfare Workers
Child Minders
Community Development Officers
Play Workers
Resources collection for colleagues
Resources collection for community
Resources for existing courses
Learning materials for clients
Promotion to client groups
Sponsored place distribution
Organising group discussion
Families living in poor conditions
People in depressed areas
Families at risk
Prisoners
Ethnic Minorities
Mothers on low income
Single parent families
Adult and Community Educators
School Teachers
Training Officers
Youth Workers
MSC Schemes
Organising group discussion
Sponsored place distribution
Promotion to client groups
Learning materials for clients
Resources for existing courses
Resource collection for community
Resource collection for colleagues
People approaching retirement
People facing redundancy
Education for Family Life students
Adult literacy students
Unemployed adults
Pregnant teenagers
Community Groups
WI's
PTA's
Playgroups/Mother and Toddler Clubs
National Childbirth Trust
Pre-school Playgroups Association
Keep Fit Clubs
Organising group discussion
Sponsored place distribution
Promotion to client groups
Learning materials for clients
Resources for existing courses
Resource collection for community
Resource collection for colleagues
Group members
Mothers with young children
Pregnant women
Local action group members
Women suffering depression

Figure 7 Users and uses of Community Education materials


Collaborating organisations
Experts
Evaluation
Course
Fee paying students
Sponsored students
Educational technology
Study pack
Experts
Study pack
Intermediaries
Learners
Course book
Book purchasers
Booklets
Demand from external agencies
Booklets
Local radio listeners
Patients
Discussion pack
Testing and selection by intermediary
Discussion pack
Intermediaries
Group members
Topic leaflets
Experts
Transforming
Topic leaflets
Intermediaries
Health visitors
Mothers
Case studies
Group leader
Dialogue
Local people
Articles
Magazine readers

The materials development cycle



Basic Question	Aspects	
	Closed	Open
Who?	Scheme open to select groups only	Scheme open to all
	Set entry requirements, eg traditional exam success	Self-assessment and diagnostic facilities
	Scheme not marketed	Extensive publicity, regularly updated information
Why?	Choice made by others, eg tutor, employer	Learner choice
	No counselling or guidance	Pre-entry counselling
What?	Entire syllabus set out in advance, eg by validating body; no choice possible within it	Learner formulates own objectives and syllabus
	Limited to materials the tutor has produced	Uses wide range of materials drawn from many sources
	Whole course must be taken	Content tailored to need; individual learners can take different modules
	No guidance on selection of content	Guidance on selection of content
	Knowledge, facts, 'academic'	Experience, practice, feeling, attitude
	No recognition of past experience	Credit given for past experience

Basic Question	Aspects	
	Closed	Open
How?	Only one method/style provided for; little variation in learner activity	Choice of learning methods/ styles, varied activities
	One route only through material	Choice of routes through material
	Package in one medium only	Package uses variety of media
Where?	One place only (eg at work)	Learner chooses place (eg home, work, while travelling)
	Regular fixed attendance required	Learner can attend, or not — as desired
	Practical work requires fixed attendance	Practical work offered through kits and/or drop-in access and/or place of work itself
When?	Fixed starting date(s)	Start any time
	Learner placed by a fixed timetable	Learner decides place of work
	Fixed ending	End at any time

Basic Question	Aspects Closed ———	——— Open
How is the learner doing?	Externally mixed method of assessment eg formal exam	Variety of assessment methods; learner choice of assessment methods; learner constructs method of assessment
	Normative assessment	Criteria/competency based assessment
	No feedback on performance	Frequent, full, on-going feedback on performance, available as desired
	Assessment dates fixed non-negotiable	Learner decides when to be assessed
	Assessment available only whole course	Assessment available for each module

Lewis R What is Open Learning? 1986 *quoted in*
Open Learning for Adults Thorpe and Grugeon Eds
Longman 1987

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY/MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION COMMUNITY PROGRAMME - Barefoot Educators?

Angie Ballard

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Open University

The Open University received its Charter in July 1969 and is now in its 18th teaching year. Currently the OU offers more than 136 undergraduate courses and over 257 Continuing Education courses and packs. In 1987 there were some 67,000 undergraduates and about 70,000 participants in the Continuing Education programme taking courses of various lengths. There are now over 82,000 graduates since degrees were first awarded in 1973 and these graduates have ranged from 22 to 91 in age. About 35% had less than the minimum entry requirements for a traditional university.

1.2 Community Education at the Open University

Community Education was established to meet one of the aims of the University Charter "to contribute to the educational well being of the community as a whole". Community Education is part of the Continuing Education provision and reaches increasing numbers of people. Between 1977 and 1986 there were some 83,000 course registrations, 37,000 discussion packs were distributed and there were some 135,000 course book sales.

In 1988 some 23 courses and study packs are offered as part of the Community Education programme. The material includes courses on Health, Parenthood, Employment and Life Planning, Consumer Choice and Community Roles, and includes not only packs centred around a course book such as Health Choices, but also smaller specialised sets of material, such as Through the School Gates.

The range of materials relate relevant theory to the immediate needs of the learners and build on the learners existing knowledge: they value the experience and existing skills of the learner. The interactive and structured nature of the materials allows emphasis on the learners' needs and supports the process of learning rather than imparting knowledge. An example of the structure and devices found within the material is shown in figure 1.

Since 1978 several special schemes have been developed to provide financial support, with material mediated via intermediaries to reach new sections of the Community.

1.3 The Open University Manpower Services Commission Programme

Pilot projects in 1981-1982 showed how successful members of the local community could be in the facilitator role - "When a member of the local community introduced the materials to neighbours, friends, fellow parents and offered to lead a learning group on the subject of the participant's choice, then people willingly joined in and found by analysing their own experiences and the insights of others they not only enjoyed themselves and learned a good deal but felt empowered to deal more confidently with relevant aspects of their lives" (Dolley J 1987).

In 1983 a Regional Project was set up in the South East Region, Region 13, offering over 100 places on a Community Programme Scheme. The success of this scheme led to an agreement in 1985 for an OU/MSC National Agency, so there was one managing agent for a number of Open University schemes. The Agency started operation in February 1986, based at Worthing in Sussex, to provide administration and support to all OU regional projects. To date there have been some 43 projects distributed nationally, as figure 2, shows and the scheme has provided employment for over 900 people.

The Community Programme aims "to provide temporary employment opportunities for the long term unemployed. The projects aim to establish and support informal groups using distance learning materials relating to the needs of the community, especially in the areas of parenting, health and employment. The projects aim in particular to extend opportunities to sections of the community not reached by more traditional forms of adult education and where existing provision is seen to be inaccessible or inappropriate". (Gray L 1987).

All regions adopted the original Region 13 model - very open ended proposals which provided for teams of one full time co-ordinator and about 12 part time workers, usually called Community Development Officers (CDOs). The organisational structure relating the managing agency, the projects, the Open University and the MSC is complex, the more so because both the OU and the MSC have regional bases as well as a central location. Figure 3 shows the organisational complexity. Most CDOs identify with their local project, and possibly the OU regional office.

2.0 The Community Development Officers

2.1 Barefoot Educators

The concept of the barefoot educator was derived from the term 'barefoot doctor' used so successfully in Third World Health programmes. The term is used to define "an educator who is not trained as a teacher but who, equipped with good learning materials and basic skills, can be a catalyst for community based learning to occur". (Dolley 1987).

2.2 Who are the CDOs?

The only unifying characteristic of the Community Development Officer is that they need the eligibility requirements for the MSC Community Programme and these requirements have become increasingly stringent. An analysis of the first 230 CDOs on the national scheme showed a heterogenous group ranging in age from 18 to 59. Just under two thirds were women (62%) and their educational background was likely to be from one of two groups - some basic qualification, such as CSEs or a first degree. (Ballard 1988).

2.3 What do they do?

"CDOs are not required to teach: they act as group leaders, promoting discussion, encouraging participation and fostering a supportive atmosphere in which people can gain maximum benefit from the materials and the group learning environment. They help group members identify their learning needs and, using their local knowledge of the available resources, plan courses tailored to meet those needs. The project budget proposals allow for the purchase of learning packs so there is no cost to the learners". (Gray, op cit).

The CDOs are employed for 18 hours a week, for a maximum of 52 weeks (although there have been five excusals for employment beyond the year). They run groups, collaborating with both voluntary and statutory agencies in setting these up, or linking in with existing groups. As well as this they run single workshops, run displays and taster sessions at exhibitions, and provide support for individual learners.

2.4 Training

CDOs participate in 8 days initial training, 5 days ongoing training and 5 days personal development training. The training is made up of 9 elements, shown in figure 4, and the core elements of the training are:

1. knowledge of available learning materials, their structure and use,

2. group facilitation and skills of using learning materials in groups,

3. how adults learn and the range of learning opportunities available,

4. interpersonal and communication skills,

5. public speaking skills,

6. knowledge of local area and community needs,

7. making contacts in the community-including negotiation and assertiveness,

8. administrative and organisational skills,

9. publicity skills and raising awareness.

In their first weeks the CDOs are required to undertake a Community Survey of their local area to see what is already provided and which of the many statutory and voluntary agencies are already represented and working in the area. The quality of the Community Surveys varies with the background and interest of the CDOs but in several areas local libraries have requested copies as a local information and reference document, and at least two are to be published locally.

As well as the face to face training days CDOs are given a Training Resource pack, and a Personal Development pack. In addition at the start of their work they are provided with a pack of materials to study, and this initial pack is provided free of charge. Other material available for use by the projects is provided on a loan basis by the National Agency. Initially the material provided was Health Choices, but by demand from the CDOs this was changed to Work Choices. Whilst the material initially was predominantly from Community Education, increasing use has been made of material from other parts of the University, and indeed from other agencies.

2..5 Working with other agencies

A key part of the CDOs' job is liaising and collaborating with other agencies and Table A from the annual report and figure 5 show the increase over the first year - in August as the projects got into full swing after the staff training period there were 973 contacts and by March 1987 there were 1858 contacts. Agencies include local and national voluntary organisations as well as statutory agencies, such as the Social Services, Health Education and Adult Education Centres.

The local networks become complex and extensive - the Project Co- ordinator for Oxford drew up two spider graphs, one of which is shown in figure 6 which illustrates the range of groups in the community reached by the project with 8 CDOs working over a period of 10 months.

The agency manager, Liz Gray, was presented with the John Robinson award in the autumn of 1987 in recognition of the work of the programme in fostering interagency collaboration and community development.

2.6 Working with Groups

Group work predominates, as figure 7 shows - there were some 744 groups in March 1987, with 5,357 learners, and the increase shown in January, February and March 1987 continued for much of 1988. The picture at present (March 88), is one of declining numbers as projects close

with the MSC moves to become a training agency and the wind up of the Community Programme scheme.
The materials provide a focus for the groups - for some discussion is enough, others opt to go on and do the assignments. The projects do not exclusively use Open University materials but mix and match this material with other material that is available. For some of the oral history work undertaken with elderly people in residential homes, often no OU material is used but local library material and reminiscence picture packs are used.

Whilst the end users have not been the subject of any systematic outside study, the work of the CDOs is reported on a week by week basis for the MSC and in more detail on a month by month basis to the National Agency. There is no doubt that the public taking part in the groups generally feel they have gained - there is continuity of participation - "As joining a group is voluntary and costs nothing, people very clearly vote with their feet". (Gray op cit pp 30). Farnes is undertaking a detailed study of the benefits and changes reported on in one particular area, and this shows how such groups can be the starting point for a whole series of personal changes, and personal growth and development. (Farnes 1988).

3.0 Open Learning in the Community

3.1 Overall Perspective

It was always an aim of Community schemes to get the best possible benefit for the community and indeed Normington et al stress this aspect in their review "Value for Money in the Community Programme" (Normington et al 1986, p58). Information about what happens in the field comes from CDOs' monthly reports, Project Co-ordinators' monthly reports and members of the community. In addition to the study by Farnes, there has been a local area study undertaken in Norfolk, and a separate national study for Wales. (Turner J 1987, Richards H 1988).

3.2 The Project Perspective

There are many examples within the CDO reports and Project Co- ordinator reports of developments within the community that fit with Lewis's definition of Open Learning (Lewis 1986) and below are some illustrative examples from the projects.

(i) A CDO working with the Drop-in Centre Organiser, worked with a group of people recovering from mental illness. There were 14 people at the first session, which reduced to a core of 8, with others dropping in and out. The group started using Health Choices and Healthy Eating. They explored the use of tranquillisers and the relationship between stress and eating patterns and worked together to reduce their own intake of tranquillisers. The CDO felt able to withdraw from the group at this stage. As time went on the group became more supportive of each other and by discussion and agreement they decided to move on to other topics from Parents and Teenagers and Action Planning. In Lewis's terms there was learner choice, the learners formulated their own objectives and syllabus, the learners chose the pace and place of study and they went on from this work to various destinations.

(ii) In Glasgow an Unemployed Workers Centre provided the forum for two groups, one elected to study Health Choices and the other Learning About Co-operatives. All members of the first group went on to do the optional assignments, the second group led to the setting up of a co-operative catering business.

(iii) Working with the Community Support Officer from the District Council, it was decided to build on earlier work involving Caring For Older People, and a series of seminars on Retirement were set up. From these a local forum developed which not only discussed but also tackled local issues of concern to the elderly. As well as this activist group an evening home study group met over a period of weeks to work through the material.

(iv) An initial group from the family centre decided to look at the Pre-school Child pack, and despite their initial worries over literacy problems, the group of 10 worked through the pack. Others at the centre became interested and a second group elected to follow Parents and Teenagers. The centre also provided a venue for a local group of Childminders who wanted to study the Childminding pack.

(v) The group of CDOs were inspired by the video on the Attleborough experiment to carry out their own Community Needs Survey. They designed and carried out face to face interviews with both users and non users of local education centres about their perceived needs. The findings were used both by themselves and the Adult Education workers to try to tailor their provision to meet identified local needs.

(vi) When looking at parent materials as part of a group facilities for play in the locality engendered much discussion and the group went on to investigate setting up a play scheme in the holidays. The parents formed a steering group, and one parent was appointed overall co-ordinator. The CDO provided support, and acted as facilitator in the early stages. The play scheme was established for the summer, and in addition the group arranged with the recreation department for transport to be provided to the local swimming pool and sports hall.

3.3 The Individual Perspective

The previous sections gave some selected examples from the project accounts. Individuals also provide a vivid description of the scheme in action, and it is argued facets of open learning in practice in the community, as the following extracts from the qualitative study on CDOs' experiences shows. (Ballard in preparation).

"I think the people who are on this programme, the CDOs, they want to help the people, the group members ... we decided to do our own study to see what people want - do they want this stuff? We go out and try to set up groups and come up against a lot of brick walls - they are not interested. You can put as much effort as you like into it but if people are not interested, there is no point'. (case 5).

'And also it is knowing where to go for which bits of information and making contacts in the community because it is - I mean even if I do not use that in this job the people I meet say 'Oh I have got such a problem, I do not know what I am going to do about it' and I can say 'well why don't you try and get in touch with such and such' - it is very useful for that.

Now people locally are starting to come to me for information. (author emphasis) I mean I have not lived here very long but people do know that I have been in contact with these people and I do know what people can be useful in certain ways and so rather than flicking through the Yellow Pages people come and ask me and I have only been in the area just over a year'. (case 4).

4.0 Issues

4.1 The Role

All documents relating to the CDO role stress that it is not teaching, and neither is it selling. However some CDOs find it hard to define their role in any terms other than teaching. In discussions with others working in the community there is a suspicion of the aims of the projects and the Open University's motivations. 'There is no such thing as something for nothing' aptly sums up the scepticism.

'I can't think of any dislikes offhand: perhaps it is that the job is not valued by some people. It is not seen as being worthwhile or it is not recognised as being anything that is particularly useful because even friends have said 'well you are not doing anything productive are you - it is all talk. It is just to satisfy your ego - you think you have done someone some good but you have not changed any lives', but I say well as long as somebody's got something from it - even if they have not learnt anything ...' (case 2).

Initially some professional agencies were suspicious of the CDOs, feeling their training could not equip them for the complex task of Community Work. Stressing the barefoot approach does not always meet with acceptance, but generally over time the work becomes accepted. In other locations the CDOs are seized on eagerly as yet another resource to help with the difficult groups.

The group work is appealing to most CDOs but most are very nervous of the role initially, and see their first group as a 'rite of passage'. 'I will know I am a proper CDO when I have had my first group'. (Case 4). Interestingly some 13% of the first 230 CDOs go on to work with groups in the community, 8% as part of their paid employment, whilst 5% were continuing to have contact with their groups in a voluntary capacity.

4.2 The Time Limit

The one year time limit is a condition of the job, but many CDOs are concerned about getting some community work underway that they will have to leave or hand on to others. There is a conflict here between the overall aims of the MSC programme, and accepted practices amongst community workers. CDOs become increasingly concerned about what will happen to their groups. As the project has become more established and links with other agencies have developed, there has been more 'handing over'.

We do not know at this stage what community activity will survive after the projects close down, but the picture from the CDOs themselves is encouraging. 'The most benefit to me was that it made me realise there is more to education than formal education. It has made me aware of the community as a whole and the community as individual areas. (pause). It has made me expand as a person'. (case 14).

The First Destination study showed that some 76% of the CDOs in the labour marker were in paid employment, self employed, studying or engaged in a combination of both employment and study. Just over half the CDOs, 54%, felt they were doing what they had planned or hoped to do on leaving the scheme, whilst just over a third, 38%, did not. (Ballard 1988).

4.3 The Organisational Context

Both the Open University and the MSC make demands on the National Agency, but the two organisations operate in very different styles and to very different timetables. Hodgson and Boot earlier in this conference discuss Cunnigham's U model in detail and show the mismatch there can be between the original aims and the project as it happens on the ground. Here whatever the overall aims from the two parent organisations, the CDOs see working with and responding to the Community's needs as the prime focus of their work. The benefits to the CDOs of increased confidence, self esteem and a recognition of their own skills are enduring outcomes from particiation in the programme.

4.4 Open Learning?

Lewis describes the prerequisites of open learning in some detail and looking at what happens on this scheme and comparing this with his continuum which lists some 30 characteristics of open learning, no fewer than 21 of the conditions are met (Lewis, 1986 Table 2). The projects are a positive example of open learning in the Community.

5.0 Conclusions

Richardson, elsewhere in the conference goes into more detail in comparing the undergraduate provision with the Continuing Education provision, and shows how within the 'Open University' the degree of openness can differ substantially. The OU/MSC Community Programme demonstrates how open learning can operate in the local community using local people as barefoot educators.

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FIGURE 1 STRUCTURE AND DEVICES IN MATERIALS

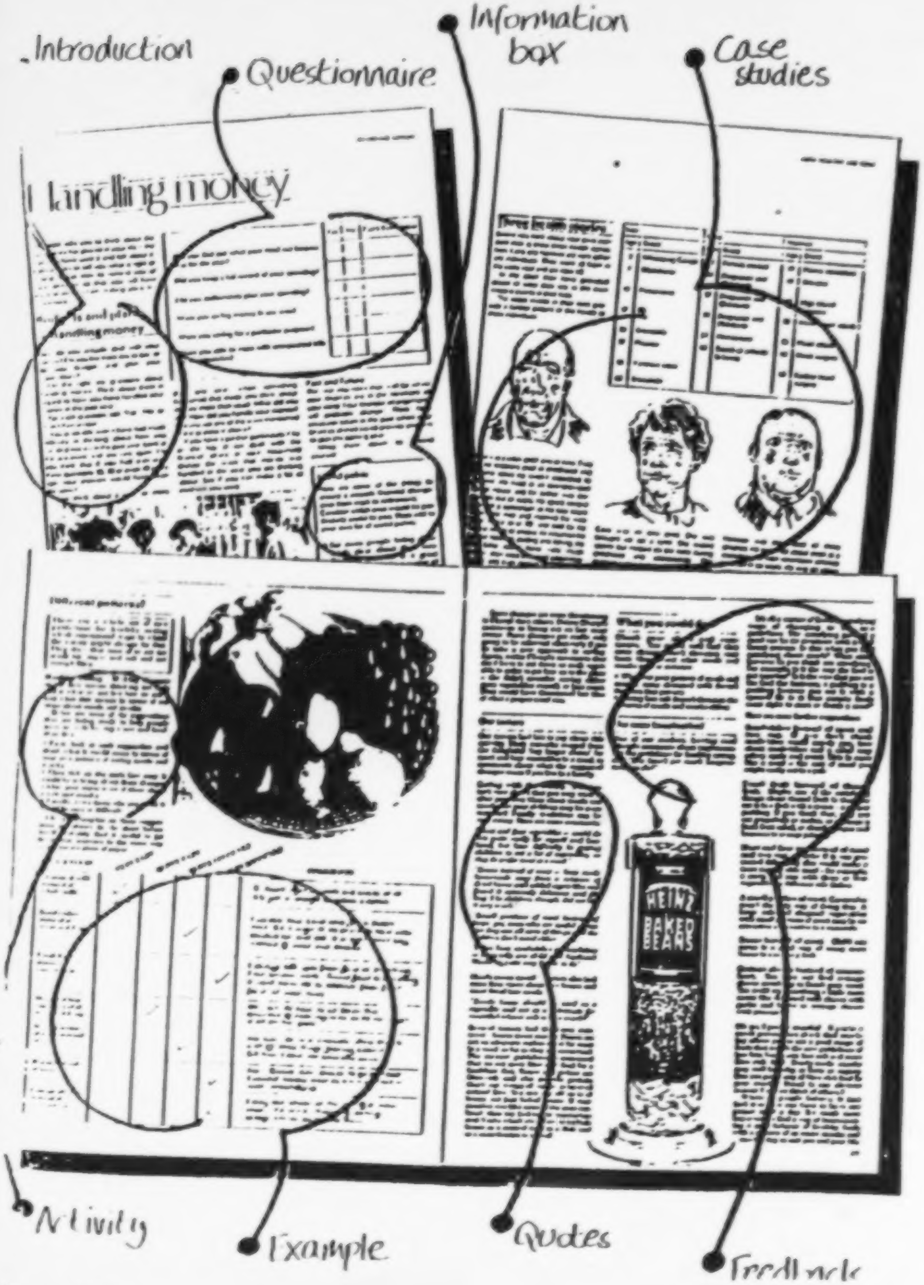
Introduction
Questionnaire
Information box
Case studies
Handling money
Activity
Example
Quotes
Feedback

FIGURE 2

Projects Map

RC01	1	Hounslow
	2	Bexley and Bromley
	3	Harrow and Brent
	4	Richmond and Kingston
	5	Croydon
RC02	6	Oxford
RC03	7	Bristol
	8	Yate
RC05	9	Lincoln
	10	Nottingham
RC06	11	Essex
	12	Luton
	13	Norfolk
	14	Suffolk
RC07	15	Rotherham
RC08	16	Halton
	17	Crewe/Nantwich
	18	Warrington
	19	Chester
RC09	20	Blyth
	21	Hexham
	22	Morpeth
	23	North_Tyneside
	24	Cumbria
	25	Middlesbrough
RC10	26	Monmouth
	27	Abertillery
	28	Powys
	29	Bangor
	30	Dyfed
	31	Colwyn
	32	West_Glamorgan
	33	Newport
	34	Cardiff
	35	Ystrad Mynach
	36	Aberdare
RC11	37	Drumchapel
	38	Highlands
	39	Grampian
RC13	40	N. W. Surrey
	41	South Surrey
	42	West Sussex
	43	East Sussex

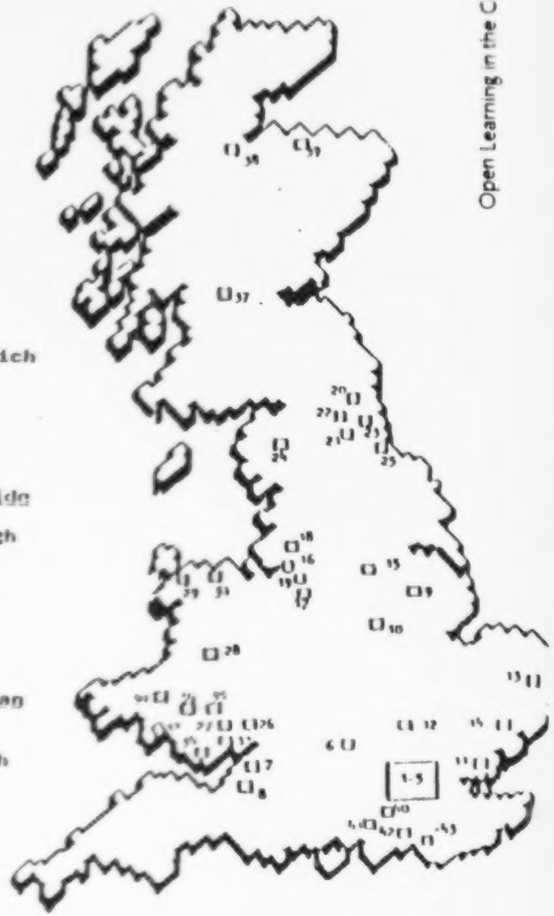

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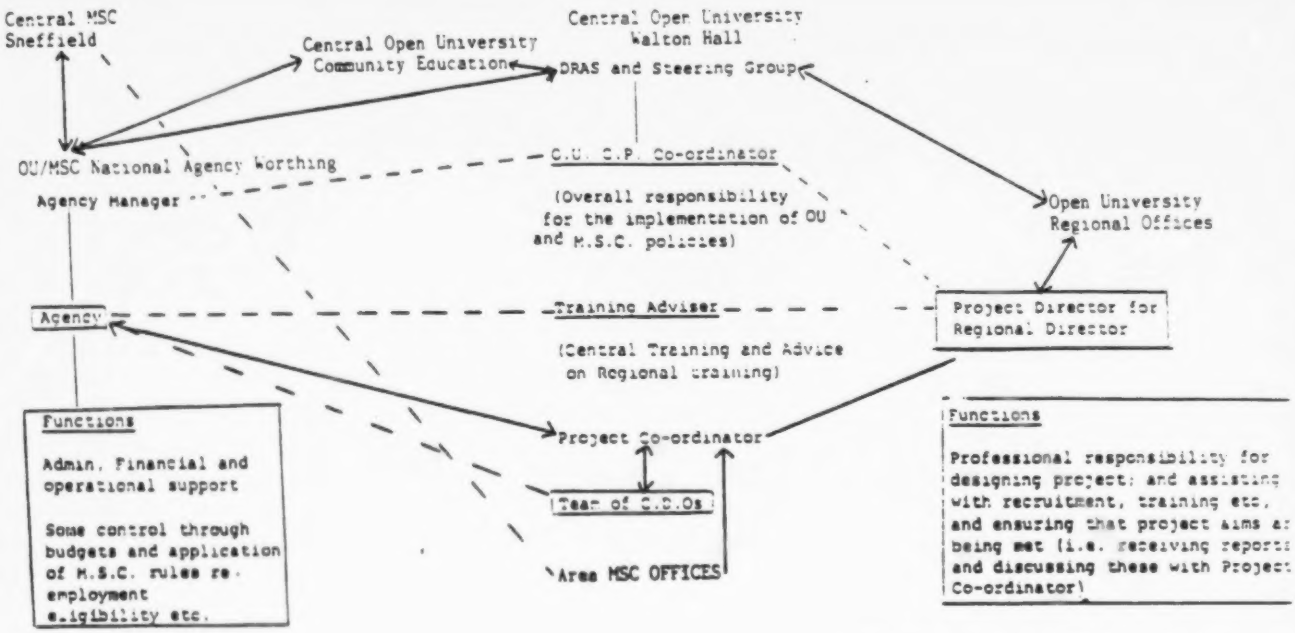
FIGURE 3 THE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT


Central MSC
Sheffield
Central Open University
Community Education
Central Open University
Walton Hall
DRAS and Steering Group
OU/MSC National Agency Worthing
Agency Manager
O.U. C.P. Co-ordinator
(Overall responsibility
for the implementation of OU
and M.S.C. policies)
Open University
Regional Offices
Agency
Training Adviser
(Central Training and Advice
on Regional training)
Project Director for
Regional Director
Functions
Admin. Financial and
operational support
Some control through
budgets and application
of M.S.C. rules re.
employment
eligibility etc.
Project Co-ordinator
Team of C.D.Os
Area MSC OFFICES
Functions
Professional responsibility for
designing projects and assisting
with recruitment, training etc,
and ensuring that project aims a
being met (i.e. receiving report
and discussing these with Project
Co-ordinator)

adapted from Gray 1987, Appendix 1

TABLE A

OU CP PROJECTS
August 1986 — January 1987
Contacts/Enquiries/Referrals

Month	No. of active projects	No. of contacts made with agencies	No. of enquiries	No. of referrals
AUGUST	15	973	649	99
SEPTEMBER	27	1091	1700	168
OCTOBER	28	1553	4115	301
NOVEMBER	31	1726	2283	343
DECEMBER	31	1589	1858	305
JANUARY	35	1660	2751	294
FEBRUARY	35	1782	3903	315
MARCH	36	1858	2540	344

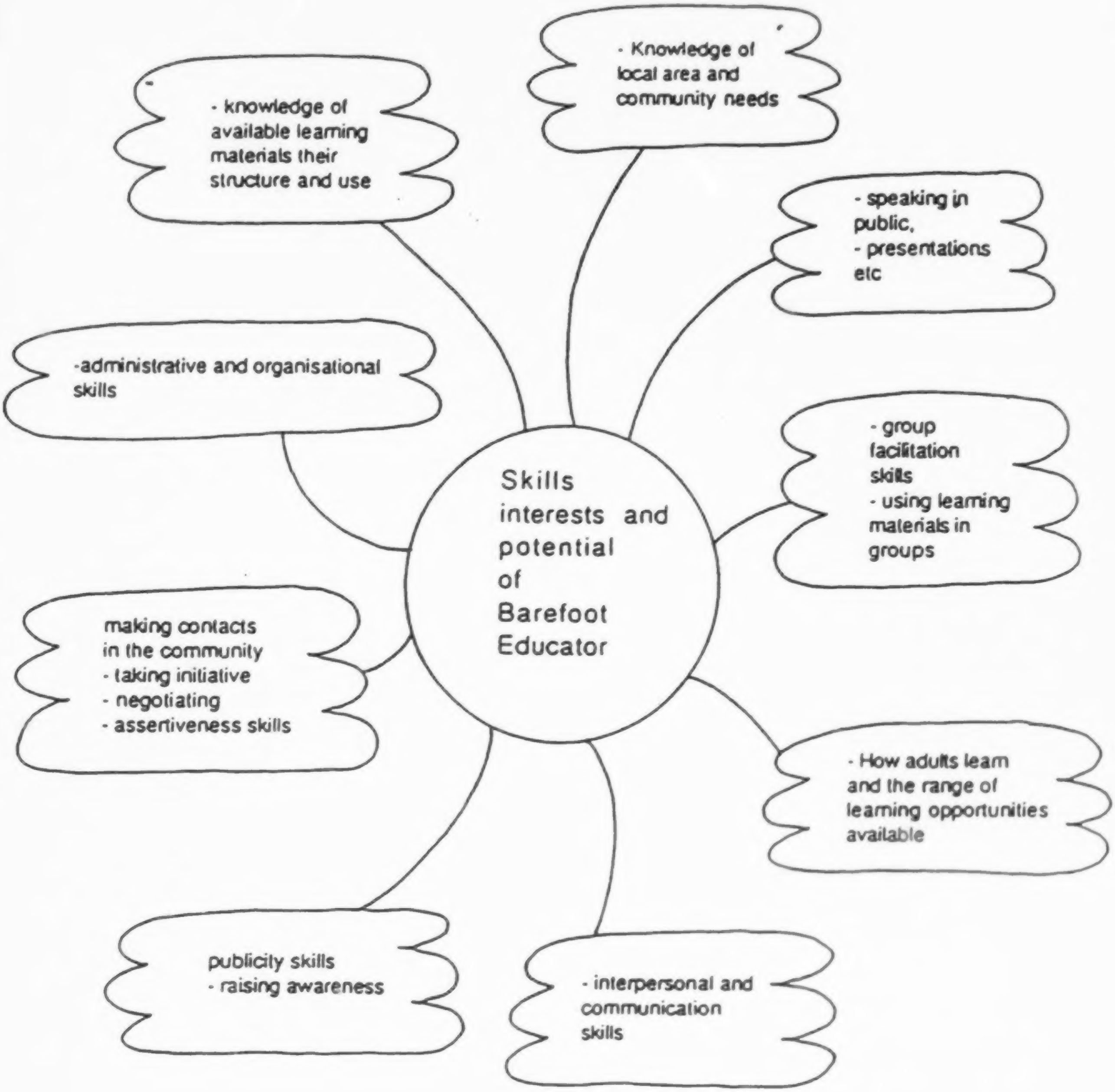
Notes:

(i) The figures for October 1986 show a sharp increase, partly due to is being the traditional time of year for course registration, but also effected by the work of two projects in particular, one in the north and one in the south running exhibitions, taster sessions and a county conference for the LEA.

(ii) The high number of enquires received in February is partly accounted for by requests for educational materials on AIDS.

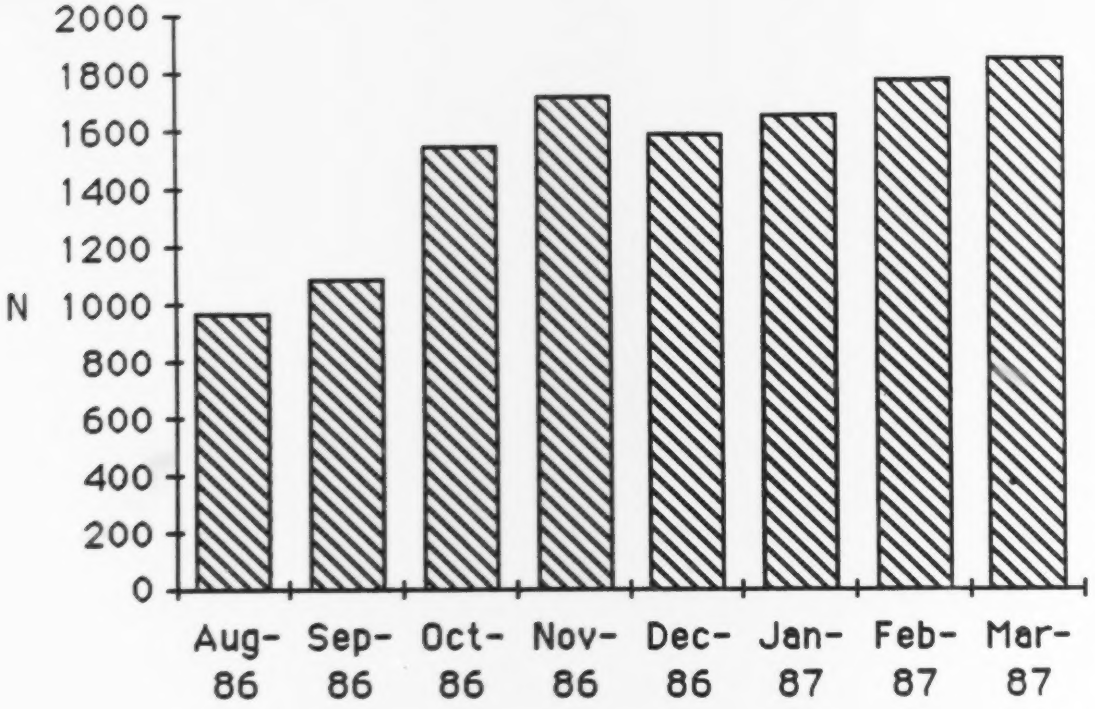
Source Gray L 1987

FIGURE 4 INITIAL TRAINING FOR THE BAREFOOT EDUCATOR


Skills interests and potential of Barefoot Educator
- knowledge of available learning materials their structure and use
- Knowledge of local area and community needs
- speaking in public, - presentations etc
-administrative and organisational skills
- group facilitation skills - using learning materials in groups
making contacts in the community - taking initiative - negotiating - assertiveness skills
- How adults learn and the range of learning opportunities available
publicity skills - raising awareness
- interpersonal and communication skills

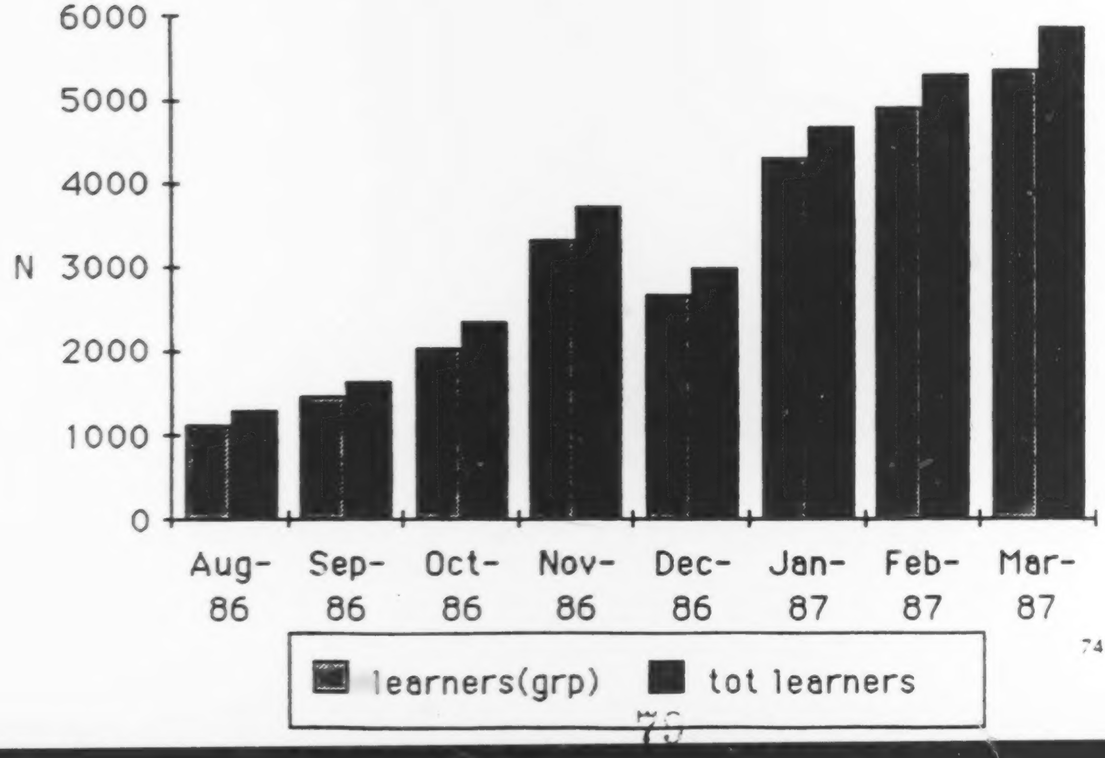
source: Dolley 1987

FIGURE 5



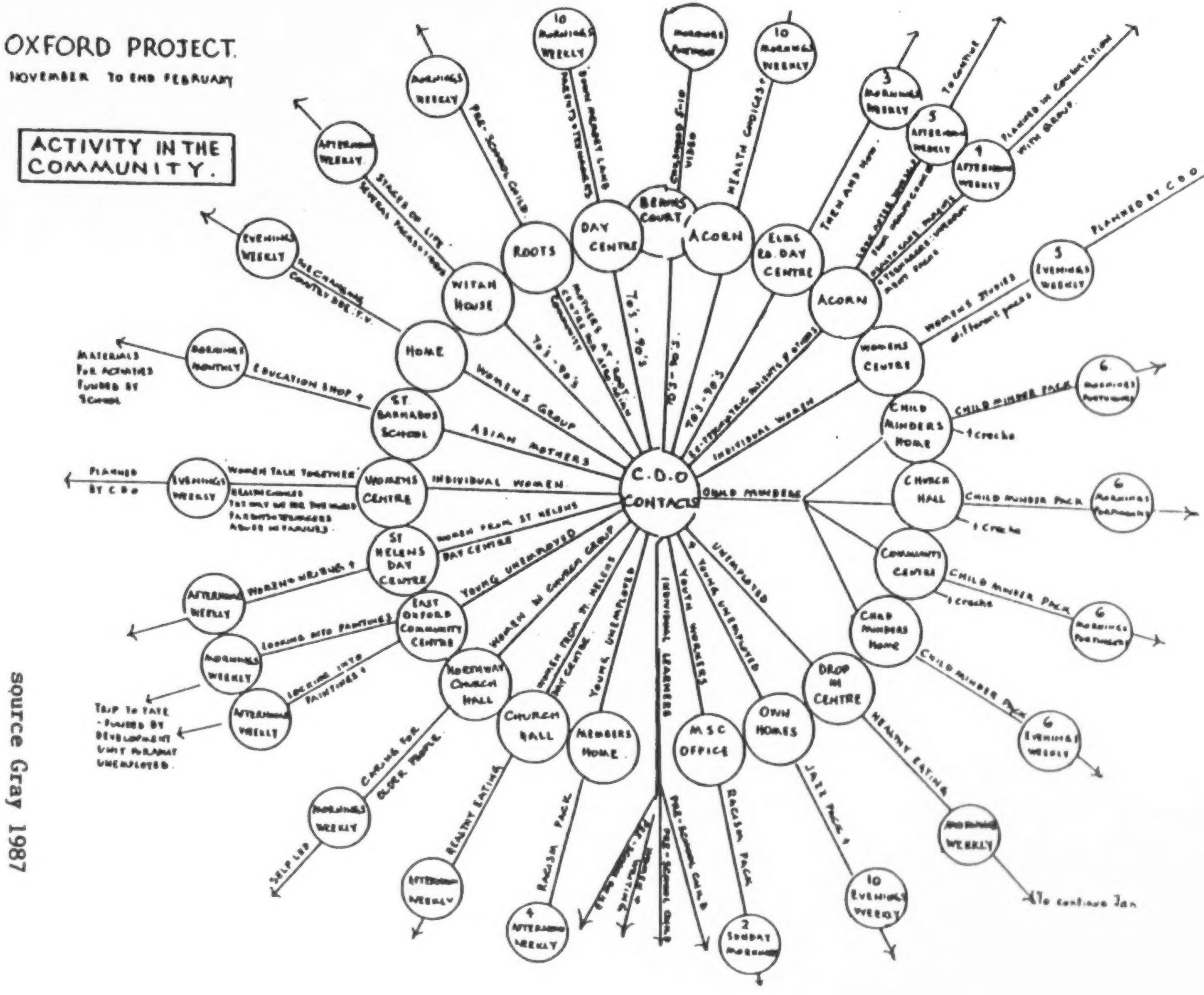
N contacts made with agencies

FIGURE 7



Total N of learners in groups & total N learners including individual learners supported

FIGURE 6


OXFORD PROJECT.
NOVEMBER TO END FEBRUARY
ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY.
C.D.O CONTACTS
HOME
WITAN HOUSE
ROOTS
DAY CENTRE
BERINS COURT
ACORN
ELMS RD. DAY CENTRE
ACORN
WOMENS CENTRE
CHILD MINDERS HOME
CHURCH HALL
COMMUNITY CENTRE
CHILD MINDERS HOME
DROP IN CENTRE
OWN HOMES
MSC OFFICE
MEMBERS HOME
CHURCH HALL
NORTHWAY CHURCH HALL
EAST OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE
ST HELENS DAY CENTRE
WOMENS CENTRE
ST. BARNABUS SCHOOL
WOMENS GROUP
ASIAN MOTHERS
INDIVIDUAL WOMEN
WOMEN FROM ST HELENS DAY CENTRE
YOUNG UNEMPLOYED
WOMEN IN CHURCH GROUP
WOMEN FROM ST. HELENS DAY CENTRE
YOUNG UNEMPLOYED
INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS
YOUTH WORKERS
& YOUNG UNEMPLOYED
UNEMPLOYED
CHILD MINDERS
INDIVIDUAL WOMEN
70's - 90's
70's - 90's
70's - 90's
70's - 90's
MOTHERS AT ROOTS
PRE-SCHOOL CHILD
STAGES OF LIFE
THE CHANGING COUNTRYSIDE T.V.
EDUCATION SHOP +
MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITIES FUNDED BY SCHOOL
MORNINGS MONTHLY
WOMEN TALK TOGETHER
HEALTH CHOICES
PARENTS TEENAGERS
ABUSE IN FAMILIES
EVENINGS WEEKLY
PLANNED BY C.D.O
WOMEN WRITING +
AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
LOOKING INTO PAINTINGS
MORNINGS WEEKLY
LOOKING INTO PAINTINGS +
AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
TRIP TO TATE - FUNDED BY DEVELOPMENT UNIT FOR ADULT UNEMPLOYED.
CARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE
MORNINGS WEEKLY
SELF LED
HEALTHY EATING
AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
RACISM PACK
4 AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
PRE-SCHOOL CHILD
PRE-SCHOOL CHILD
RACISM PACK
2 SUNDAY MORNINGS
JAZZ PACK +
10 EVENINGS WEEKLY
HEALTHY EATING
MORNINGS WEEKLY
To continue Jan
CHILD MINDER PACK
6 EVENINGS WEEKLY
CHILD MINDER PACK
1 creche
6 MORNINGS FORTNIGHTLY
CHILD MINDER PACK
1 creche
6 MORNINGS FORTNIGHTLY
CHILD MINDER PACK
1 creche
6 MORNINGS FORTNIGHTLY
WOMENS STUDIES
different paces
5 EVENINGS WEEKLY
PLANNED BY C D O
To continue February
THEN AND NOW
3 MORNINGS WEEKLY
5 AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
To continue
4 AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
PLANNED IN CONSULTATION WITH GROUP
HEALTH CHOICES
10 MORNINGS WEEKLY
VIDEO
MORNINGS FORTNIGHTLY
10 MORNINGS WEEKLY
MORNINGS WEEKLY
AFTERNOONS WEEKLY
EVENINGS WEEKLY

source Gray 1987

THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEES IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Tony Dodds

Introduction: the problem of refugees: a country without a country

1. It is estimated that there are more than IO million refugees in the world today. At least half of them are in Africa. The number is almost certainly growing. The phenomena which led people to flee their homes and their countries in fear of starvation, persecution or discrimination are complex and varied. In Africa, however, there seem to be three main causes. First are the frequent and devastating economic disasters and the apparent failure by home governments to guarantee equal and adequate access to emergency relief to all their people. Secondly, there are civil wars arising from the breakdown of recently established mechanisms for social cohesion; peoples of different cultures have been forced into common and often arbitrary national boundaries by nineteenth century colonial divisions; they are once again being split apart by age-old traditional inter-tribal conflicts. Thirdly, now almost exclusively in Southern Africa, there are the pockets of racial discrimination by minority white communities, resultant struggles for political liberation by black majorities, and their repression. Whatever the causes; the results throughout Africa are similar. Communities of exiles have been forced to leave their homes and means of livelihood and to seek asylum in neighbouring countries whose resources are hardly adequate to provide economic and social services to their own people let alone to large new influxes of refugees. These communities are sometimes forced to make new and temporary homes in large refugee camps in underpopulated and therefore often unproductive parts of their host countries; in other situations they join the growing armies of the urban poor in the slums of Africa's cities.

2. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the major international agency concerned with the relief and rights of refugees, has recently focussed its publicity on the search for what it calls "durable solutions" in the face of the growing refugee crisis. It proposes three such solutions: resettlement, voluntary repatriation, and integration. The first depends on finding third countries, usually in the industrialised world, willing to accept quotas of refugees as prospective permanent citizens. Apart from occasional magnanimous acts of charity in the light of publicity given to some new disaster, the numbers who are accepted are very small. They are, moreover, usually the most highly educated members of the refugee communities and their resettlement deprives those communities of vital leadership resources. The second has only proved significant in the few cases where dramatic internal political change has allowed refugees to return home without fear of molestation. There is a serious danger of UNHCR and host governments, in their over-eagerness to persuade refugees to return home, to resort to enforced repatriation. The only solution open to the vast majority of refugees, given the unpredictability of such political changes, is integration into the society of their host country. But neither refugees nor host governments are usually prepared to envisage such integration and the services it entails until the initial crisis has dragged on from year to year and become a long-term problem.

3. The initial crisis is usually seen as an international emergency. The host government, faced with the influx of a flood of refugees, appeals for international assistance to cope with the feeding, housing and health emergencies which inevitably result. The assumption, by both host government and by the international agencies which traditionally respond to the call, is that the emergency is temporary. Food, shelter and medical care to prevent or cope with epidemics is what is needed. At that stage neither has time for educational planning. It is significant, however, that in nearly all refugee communities, one of the first steps taken by the refugees themselves is to create makeshift educational facilities for their children and learning opportunities for themselves through which they can adjust to their new and often disastrous living conditions.

4. This paper is about the provision of education services for refugees in Africa, the problems, various kinds of provision, and the challenges it presents to the international community. The problems are comparatively easy to identify. They relate to the status of being refugees - foreigners whose culture, language and educational background or expectations are often different from those of the country in which they find themselves - and the insecurity of being homeless. They relate to the constraints of host governments in the third world whose resources for educational provision are usually inadequate for their own people and cannot therefore be stretched to meet large new demands, or even small specialised demands; and they relate to the nature of international aid: there are very limited external funds for education partly because of the unpredictable and highly variable nature of voluntary emergency funding on which support for refugees so often depends.

5. The paper will now attempt to examine three case studies of refugee educational provision in Africa with

special emphasis on the use of distance and open learning. It will then try to draw some conclusions from these studies about the nature of such provision and the special educational needs of refugees. It will finally turn its attention to ways in which the international community might be able to alleviate some of the problems and address itself to meeting at least some of those special needs.

Case Studies: 3 educational programmes for refugees in Africa

A. The Institute of In-service Teacher Training (IITT) Somalia

1. The background: during the late seventies and early eighties the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia led to a massive exodus of ethnic Somalis from the Ogaden region of Ethiopia where the 1977/78 war between those countries was fought. The Ogaden has been disputed territory between the two for more than a century. Its inhabitants are largely Somali speaking, and of Somali culture and are traditionally nomadic by lifestyle in a way which makes the present national boundary doubly bizarre. It is estimated that there are between 750,000 and 850,000 such refugees settled in Somalia in approximately 40 refugee camps, mainly scattered along that border. Many more than half of these are school age children. A very large proportion of the rest are illiterate mothers or elders. Very few indeed had completed primary school before becoming refugees. Being nomadic by culture, they are now having to adapt to a sedentary life in rural cities of 30,000 t0 40,000 people with small scale arable agriculture as one of the few forms of productive employment open to them. These settlements were set up as refugee camps and have no institutional infrastructure except what has been created by the refugees themselves and the agencies working with them.

2. The programme: the challenge was to create an educational system in this desert - or semi-desert. Somalia itself can only just provide primary education to a third of its children and suffers from a serious shortage of trained teachers. The Institute of In-service Teacher Training was set up by the Somali government in co-operation ith UNHCR in the recognition that recruiting and training teachers was the first essential step towards establishing primary schools for the refugee children. Its methodology, modelled on the experience of the UNRWA/UNESCO Institute of Education in the Middle East for Palestinian refugees, has been to recruit teenage (or older) refugees who have themselves finished primary education and, after a very short crash-course introduction to teaching, to put them into classrooms as teachers and then to train them pedagogically and upgrade them academically on-the-job. In this way the IITT was able to establish schools in nearly all the camps within a year of being set up and is now providing education, however rudimentary, to more than 40,000 children per year. At first the classrooms were tents; these were replaced by Somali-style stick-constructions which, in turn, are gradually being replaced by stone and concrete schools. Since 1983 more than 1,000 teachers have been trained and most are now being upgraded to secondary-school leaving certificate. The methods of training and upgrading are a combination of weekly local seminars under experienced national teachers as teacher training supervisors and self-study of printed correspondence courses. These are supplemented by annual vacation refresher courses. All courses combine subject content with methodology training. The more advanced courses where no local tutors are available also make use of audio-cassettes to facilitate discussion of the topics studied in seminar groups. The whole curriculum is taught in Somali and follows the Somali national curriculum exactly. This has the advantage that it qualifies students for more advanced education in Somalia; it has the theoretical disadvantage that it would not equip them for further studies if they were to return to Ethiopia.

3. Basic Adult Education: parallel to the primary schools IITT has recently begun to develop a programme of basic adult education. It is built around literacy training. As one elder put it to the needs assessment survey team, "We know that reading and writing are the ears and eyes of educated people, we want to be able to see and hear". Along with literacy and numeracy skills the programme teaches health and nutrition education, smallscale agricultural skills and small business organisation - all skills needed to help the communities to adjust to life in their new environment. It starts with pre-literacy work and will eventually produce learning materials on the same subjects for continuing education after the literacy skills have been achieved. The methods are again a combination of self-study learning materials in printed and audio form, and discussion groups led by part- trained local group leaders.

4. Problems and constraints: in some respects, because of the very efficient working of the IITT and its access to overseas funds, the refugees in Somalia are receiving primary and adult education services which are as good as or better than those of the national community. An important challenge is to find ways of ensuring that nationals living in the same remote areas, as well as the national system as a whole, can benefit from the facilities and experience of IITT. They also suffer from the same problems, however. Trained teachers at all levels are in desperately short supply. There is a severe lack of books and other learning materials: everything has to be developed from scratch. Communications between headquarters and regions and between regions and camps are very difficult: distribution and supervision networks often break down. Funds are limited making it almost impossible to extend the system to new camps and to new levels as the need for such expansion becomes clear. There are also problems which are peculiar to the refugees. The programme has been developed to cope with priority education needs. As a result, very few resources, and even fewer opportunities, are available for the minority of refugees who need other kinds of education. While curriculum and qualifications are fully integrated with national standards, large scale success by refugees at national exams would inevitably create unacceptable levels of competition for limited further education and jobs with the national community. Finally, IITT is wholly dependent for its finance on one international agency, UNHCR, and is therefore disproportionately vulnerable to comparatively minor changes in the local and international economic climate, which are reflected in the funds available to such international agencies.

B. The Sudan Extension Unit (SEU), Eastern Sudan

1. The background: civil conflict in Ethiopia, and sovereignty disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea, have led to large numbers of refugees from Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea fleeing across the border into the Sudan. This exodus has been dramatically increased by the all-too-often droughts from which Ethiopia has suffered and the limitations imposed on relief distribution by the civil war. In 1984, when the SEU was set up, there were estimated to be 500,000 such refugees in 1986 there were nearly 1,000,000, of whom many returned to Northern Ethiopia in 1987; once again there is a serious danger of a large new influx. The majority of these refugees are of peasant origin, with limited formal education. There is, however, a significant minority of young adults whose secondary education has been interrupted by their flight. Most of the former are settled in the Sudan in large refugee settlements; many of the latter are self-settled, urban refugees, seeking opportunities for urban employment.

2. The programme: In the Sudan the government has accepted direct responsibility for providing access to its own, expanded, primary schools for refugee children. This it does in its own national language (Arabic) which is not the language of most of the refugees, and so far has mainly relied on national teachers to provide for the expansion. It has sought financial assistance from UNHCR to do so. The Sudan Extension Unit was created, with the co-operation of the Sudan government, to provide educational opportunities for adult and young adult refugees in the Eastern Sudan and is developing both formal secondary level programmes for the urban youth and nonformal education programmes for the rural adults. It is also beginning to work together with the government to develop correspondence courses to train refugee teacher trainees to supplement the supply of national teachers. This recognises the drain on national teacher resources the refugees create and the fact that refugee children have special educational needs which can best be met by teachers from their own community. It has been funded by a consortium of bilateral aid agencies, both government and non-governmental, and has received significant assistance from the CEC. So far it has established two main programmes. The secondary courses give people who have started but not finished secondary school an opportunity to complete their studies and to sit for secondary qualifications which have international recognition both for employment and for further education in or outside the Sudan. Students receive and study individually specially prepared correspondence courses. In addition they meet, two or three times a week in study groups, with one of their own members acting as group leader, to review their individual progress and to help each other with their difficulties. The study centres are supervised by qualified tutors and, on a regular basis, individuals and groups can consult these tutors to seek assistance where they can't solve their own problems. In this way a small number of teachers can provide adequate tutorial support to large numbers of students. At the same time refugee students, whose living conditions are far from conducive to private study, are provided with places where they can study effectively. The nonformal education courses have so far included functional literacy and numeracy courses in Arabic and Tigrigna (the language of most of the refugees) and primary health care training materials for primary health workers in the camps. Here also the lack of properly trained and qualified literacy tutors to run the programme themselves by traditional methods is recognised. The primers and supporting readers are carefully designed to 'programme' group leaders, who are themselves literate but not trained, to use them with their group members who are illiterate: the materials are self-teaching, the group leaders are facilitators and interpreters of these materials to the students. It seems to work. In the pilot project approximately 400 men and women successfully completed the basic stage. A wide range of post-literacy readers, both functional and entertaining, are now being written by literate refugees to enable newly-literates to practise their skills in ways which they can recognise as useful and enjoyable. Programmes of practical vocational training are also being explored with the appropriate authorities.

3. Problems and constraints: the major problem for Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in the Sudan who wish to further their education is the language problem. At home their educational system, from secondary level upwards, operates in English. Adult basic education and initial primary education uses Ethiopian languages. In the Sudan all education is conducted in Arabic. As elsewhere in the third world, Sudan is unable to provide universal primary education to its own children and at secondary and higher education: including vocational training, opportunities are severely limited, and competition is very high. The chances for refugees with language problems are naturally very slim. Similarly, job opportunities for those with basic education and income generating opportunities for those without, are very limited, with the exception of highly seasonal and somewhat variable agricultural labour opportunities on Sudanese- owned agricultural estates in the region of some of the refugee settlements. It is therefore very difficult to establish a realistic programme of vocational training for refugees, and those seeking further education face the serious dilemma of whether to pursue courses which will equip them for employment outside the Sudan or to seek integration into the Sudanese system. The SEU itself, funded as it is on a consortium basis: has faced severe problems raising funds on a medium to long term basis to allow for serious forward planning of educational programmes which are inevitably long-term in their effects.

C. Namibian Extension Dnit (NEU), Angola and Zambia

1. The background: South Africa continues to exercise an illegal authority over the government of Namibia, formerly South West Africa. This follows the revoking by the United Nations of its former mandate to South Africa in relation to that country. In response the people of Namibia have been forced to take military action against South Africa and the conflict has led to an increasing exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries: especially Angola and, through Botswana, to Zambia. The South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) leads this resistance and is recognised by the UN as the sole legitimate representative agency for the people of Namibia. It is currently estimated that there are about 40,000 Namibian refugees in Angola and Zambia: the vast majority in Angola. Most of them live in settlements provided by the host governments and fully administered by SWAPO with international financial support. SWAPO, from very early in its struggle, has seen the education of its people, initially in exile and eventually in a liberated Namibia, as high on its list of priorities. It has therefore established an educational system in its settlements with the primary aim of educating its people for the liberation and administration of Namibia. Two important political decisions have informed its educational policies throughout. First: the national language of a liberated Namibia will be English, partly because of its advantage as an international language: partly because of its acceptability as an internal lingua franca. At present very few Namibians are fluent in English. Secondly, a conscious effort has been made to predict basic skilled personpower requirements and to orient overseas training programmes towards meetings these requirements.

2. The programmes: a significant feature in SWAPO's settlement organisation has been the creation of special Education and Health Centres in which elaborate steps are taken to provide primary education for all refugee children as well as to provide for their health care. All the teachers are themselves Namibian refugees. A few had been trained before becoming refugees, the vast majority have been and are given short intensive in-service crash training programmes. A few are sent overseas for more advanced teacher training programmes. At the other end of the educational scale a prototype university has been set up in Lusaka, Zambia, the UN Institute for Namibia, to provide medium level personpower administrative training. In Angola a Vocational Training Institute has also been established for technician training. In 1979/80 SWAPO discussed the possibility of creating a third institution to provide post primary out-of- school education to the growing numbers of young adults who had completed primary school inside Namibia or as refugees: and, at the same time, to develop a range of adult education training programmes at a more basic level, to complement locally organised adult literacy programmes in the settlements. With the co-operation of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Extension College of the Namibian Extension Unit was set up in Lusaka in 1981. Since then it has developed six courses at Junior Secondary level and two basic adult education courses (Primary Health Care and Agriculture). There are at present approximately 4,000 students enrolled on these courses. As elsewhere, because of problems of teacher or tutor supplies: the methodology adopted by the NEU is a combination of correspondence-style printed self- study courses: audio cassettes, study groups in which students work together on their course materials and occasional teacher- led tutorials. Courses in English form a core of the programmes and all courses are in English.

3. Problems and constraints: two major problems have affected the development of the NEU. The first is the extreme mobility of both staff and students who have been employed or enrolled by the NEU. When a major purpose of the institution is to prepare students to be recruited for more advanced and specialised overseas training and when many of its staff are recruited from those waiting for places for such training, such mobility is inevitable, but it makes continuity of study and of teaching and supervision of this programme much more difficult. Secondly, but linked, is the problem of communication between the headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, the national co-ordinating office in Angola and the actual settlement supervisors in both countries: and the consequent breakdowns and failures in supplies of materials and records of progress between them. Two additional, though less obvious problems are the difficulties of developing basic adult education materials in a language in which the potential students are far from fluent, and the length of time it takes to develop courses in a wide enough range of subjects to meet demand.

Conclusions and generalisations

1. These case-studies highlight a few of the problems of refugee education in Africa and illustrate some of the ways in which such problems are being tackled. Inevitably they present an incomplete picture. It is possible to use them, however to make certain important generalisations about the provision of education for refugees which may serve as guidelines for understanding the problems in a wider context and may possibly facilitate more immediate international reaction to new refugee crises as they occur - and they inevitably will occur - elsewhere in Africa.

2. Categories of refugees. Refugees are as varied as the members of any other society, and the cultural and social differences between refugee communities are as great as are the differences between the different nations and societies from which they have fled. It seems possible, however, to identify eight crucial social variables which are important in assessing educational needs among refugees. First is the way in which they are settled in exile: whether they are settled either of their own free will or by host government order in exclusive refugee settlements: or whether they have spontaneously settled within the host community wherever they have been able to find homes or means of livelihood. Second is the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the community: in most of the communities described above, all members of the communities come from the same cultural and linguistic origins: in other societies refugees from many different backgrounds are forced to live together and to share social and educational facilities. Linked is the question of whether the culture and language of the refugees is the same as that of the host country, as in the Somali case-study, or different as in the Sudan and with Namibians in Angola. A fourth variable is their prospect of future mobility, either a return home or outward transfer to a third country for resettlement: as compared with the likelihood that they will spend the foreseeable future in the country where they are now refugees. The remaining variables are personal rather than communal differences, and are usually all found in every refugee community. They are age differences, educational background, and social and economic backgrounds. All these seriously affect the final variable which is that of immediate and long-term employment prospects.

3. Levels of education. These variables strongly affect the kind of education required by each group of refugees. In particular those of age and economic, social and educational background determine the level of education required, whether primary schools, secondary schools, basic adult education, vocational training or higher education. In all three examples we looked at the largest numbers of refugees needed primary school places or basic adult education, but in all three crucial minorities needed specialised vocational or secondary education. The problem posed in all three is the problem of priorities: if the greatest number need primary school places, should any of the scarce resources be used for secondary education for the few? What are the respective costs per student of the different levels and should that determine patterns of expenditure? Should priority be determined by numbers, by potential service to the refugee community or by ultimate service to the home society?

4. Methodology. In all the examples which have been described traditional teacher-led primary schools have been set up for primary school-age refugee children. All refugees recognise this as a top priority. The problem is to find and train the teachers without an exorbitant use of limited resources or an unacceptable delay in the establishment of schools. The Somali example, following earlier successful Palestinian experience shows an effective way of overcoming these problems through distance education methods. At secondary level the problem is often that the numbers hardly justify the very expensive establishment of traditional secondary schools. Many of the potential secondary- level students are beyond normal school age and are desparately searching for jobs or part-time employment as in the Sudan, or are vital resources for the proper organisation and maintenance of their refugee communities as in the SWAPO settlements in Angola and Zambia. Again our examples show distance and open learning methods being used and adapted to provide reasonably economic and very flexible study opportunities at secondary level. In both examples courses have been developed specially for the purpose. In other cases, where numbers are too small to justify the expense of course development, suitable correspondence courses developed elsewhere have been bought in and used in the same way. Finally all three examples show distance teaching methods being used in a moderated form for basic adult education. Study groups and 'programmed' and part- trained tutors, themselves only marginally better educated than the students, and in no way subject-specialists, are being used to conduct functional literacy programmes, or pre-literacy health and agricultural education programmes. All these examples seem to point to the very great importance of distance and open learning methods to the development of feasible and efficient education programmes for refugees, at all educational levels.

5. The purposes and directions of refugee education. The question of educational level and the decisions about priorities which have to be taken, in turn raise questions about the purposes of providing education to refugees. From the case-studies it is possible to identify four important purposes recognised either by host governments or by the refugees themselves. The first is education for liberation and return to a homeland in which change has taken place. This is clearly stated as the purpose of SWAPO in its educational programme. A second purpose is education for international mobility. The requirement of the urban youth among Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan is clearly for qualifications which will equip them for jobs or further education in a third country. A third, and possibly predominant, purpose is education for integration. There is no doubt that if the majority of refugee children in the Sudan are likely to have to stay there, education in Arabic and in the Sudanese curriculum is essential. A fourth purpose, however, is often argued by refugee intellectuals and parents who recognise the need for integration into the host society but who passionately desire that the children and young adults of their society do not lose their cultural heritage. They put forward the need for education for the preservation of inherited cultural traditions and values. All these questions, therefore, raise important considerations about both the curriculum and the methodology which are most appropriate and effective in developing education programnes at any level for refugees.

6. The question of priorities. The final generalisation which I wish to draw from the case-studies puts decisions on priorities in a slightly different light, it relates to the historical stages of refugee situations. I have already pointed out how little attention is paid to educational planning at the emergency stage of a refugee crisis. And yet: from the refugees' point of view, education is a vital tool to help them to cope with the drastic changes in their lives with which they are faced: education as a means of providing child-minding facilities while mothers engage in the process of ensuring survival out of chaos; education as a means of learning how to survive in that chaos through primary health care, income generating activities, home construction techniques, community development and organisation; education as a glimmer of hope that life will eventually change for the better, if not for themselves, at least for their children. These priorities are gradually being recognised also by the agencies working with refugees and funding refugee relief. The second stage, in which most education programmes are actually developed, is the stage in which agencies and host governments are forced to accept that a crisis has become a long-term problem. At whatever stage a crisis is in, however, it is clear that refugees themselves see education as the major means through which they can eventually escape from refugee status.

International responsibilities for the education of refugees

1. This paper has not attempted to be comprehensive either in its description of educational activities for refugees in Africa or in its analysis of the problems and determining characteristics of such education programmes either from an academic or an administrative viewpoint. It would be impossible in the time or space available. It has attempted to illustrate the size and variety of the educational challenges presented by the presence of millions of refugees, of all ages and social and cultural backgrounds, scattered throughout the continent of Africa which is one of the most disturbing phenomena of the late twentieth century.

2. In particular it has tried to show the special relevance of distance and open learning approaches in providing education to refugees. I wish to end by drawing two major linked conclusions. First: the five million refugees in Africa have as much "human right" to full educational facilities as any other people; their need is at least as agreat, in many cases greater. Secondly, there is no conceivable way in which that need and that human right can be provided on the basis of existing African resources. It must be accepted as an international responsibility. I suggest that there are three stages in which that responsibility must be recognised. First we must help to ensure an ever growing awareness and understanding of the size and urgency of the problem. Secondly, we must ensure that political pressure is put on international and national agencies and authorities to accept international responsibility for its provision. Finally that pressure must result in the release of significant funds, as well as other forms of educational resources, earmarked for refugee education, to the agencies responsible for developing and providing educational facilities in refugee communities.

EMBEDDING OPEN LEARNING IN PUBLIC SECTOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Chris McAllister

We could run riot with the definitions here. What do we mean by 'embedding'? What do we mean by Open Learning? Definitions of Open Learning are easy enough to find. Here are just a few.

Open Learning is defined as any type of learning which has been designed to remove the barriers of time, place and pace and/or gives the learner the freedom to select or negotiate curricular aspects. Resource based learning, individualised learning, Flexistudy, distance learning, learning by appointment, self-help groups are all examples of open learning.

'Open Learning is a buzz-word which refers to a mixture of old and new technologies designed to make learning more accessible to the learner by whatever means.'

'Open Learning is a generic term which includes all forms of learning outwith the formal, timetabled class setting. Generally it can be characterised by allowing the learner a degree of flexibility as to the time, place and pace at which they cover the chosen programme of study. The spectrum of methods ranges from distance correspondence type at one extreme to flexible in college highly supported methods at the other.

The essence of Open Learning lies not in packages, but in flexibility and in learner-centredness. It is about taking the learning to the learner, and in doing so increasing on the one hand the availability of and access to, learning and training in whatever form, while on the other hand greatly enlarging the size of the training 'pond' from the point of view of all the providers who may want to fish in it. Open learning is also about opening up new markets for learning.

Is Open Learning:

A RECYCLED INNOVATION

or

A POINTER TOWARDS MORE PERMANENT CHANGE?

from *TEACHING* to *LEARNING*, from *TALKING* to *LISTENING*, from *LECTURING AND TEACHING* to *TUTORING AND COUNSELLING*, from *A SUPPLY-ORIENTATED PRODUCT* to *A DEMAND-ORIENTATED PRODUCT*

And so to 'embedding'. The embedding of Open Learning in FE institutions in the public sector is usually taken to mean that the principles involved in Open Learning of flexibility, of accessibility, of availability and of learner-centredness must eventually come to determine the way the public sector FE industry delivers its product, and throughout its product range. Do we design courses to suit the learner or to suit the colleges, their staff timetables, or the examining bodies? Do we deliver these courses in a flexible way to meet the needs and wishes of the learners who are our market? Is anyone debarred from study through lack of time because of work schedules, through lack of cash or through their inability to meet the college-devised entry criteria? If the answer to these questions is "Colleges, etc", "No" and "Yes" respectively, then there is room for some more embedding.

I worked for a boss once who was known to some as "The Apotheosis of Institutional Man". If something needed doing, he instituted a post or a Committee which would do it. Staff Development became the responsibility of a Committee, Open Learning that of an appointed member of staff. The rest of the institution in question, viewed these things as none of their concern. In contrast to this my colleagues and I feel that something as widely applicable as Open Learning should not be institutionalised in this way, but that it should be given as wide an **ownership** as possible, and that it should be allowed to develop across the board. As we say; **The Genie should not be bottled.**

So I am not going to prescribe how one should go about embedding Open Learning in Public Sector FE. That would not only be bottling the Genie, but it has, alas, been done already. I could do worse than commend to you the latest MSC publication, which is the Second Edition of the best-seller *Implementing Open Learning in Local Authority Institutions* recently published by the MSC and available free from OLB, MSC, S1 4PQ.

I would prefer instead to reflect on some thoughts which seem relevant in this context, and then provide you with a potted description of how we manage things in Cumbria. That should take us about another 30 minutes and leave us with plenty of time for some critical questioning.

It used to be said of FE in the UK since the war that it was a classic example of an educational system responding to perceived needs. It became a truism, and all the classic histories of FE in England and Wales trotted it out. Do we mean perceived needs or do we really mean articulated needs?

NEEDS AS PERCEIVED BY WHOM?

US or THEM?

TOP-DOWN or BOTTOM-UP?

Since the war, FE in the UK has grown into a sizeable, but some would say, not altogether responsive, industry. It has built around itself systems, such as the vocational examination system which among other things serve to protect FE's vested interests plus their own. Why is it that we have the least trained workforce in the Western world, side-by-side with the most sophisticated systems of qualifications? Whose needs does the system really serve?

The Need for FE to Change

1. Because change is being forced upon us, quite deliberately. We either respond to this pressure or go under.

2. To offer a leaner, fitter, more cost-effective product.

3. To meet the challenge of the marketplace in providing FE, training and Open Learning suited to the client's ability to pay rather than the present system of public sector subsidy.

4. To meet the challenge of planning courses based on full-cost recovery funding.

5. To market its product in a more demand-oriented way.

6. To compete with private-sector training providers.

7. To meet the real learning needs of the community in a flexible way.

Open Learning can be used as an active agent of change, as the thin end of a very useful wedge, as a Trojan Horse, as a means of bringing additional revenue to the college's development programmes and as a means of forging some cunning alliances.

Embedding Open Learning; Models which have not worked

1. **The Open Tech Luxury Superstore** 1982-87 Limited. This causes friction, rivalries and jealousies, because of what is often perceived as too generous over-funding and an arrogant attitude towards traditional college markets.

2. **The Flexistudy Department** This becomes too easily constrained within the college's vertical subdivisions.

3. **The Bargain Basement (Or the Broom Cupboard)**: No Cash, No Clout.

Models of Staff Development;

1. **The Cascade Model** (Top Down) The problem with trying to implement staff development in this way is that in most organisations invisible barriers already exist which impede attempts to change things from the top down. The Cascade Model is often contrasted with a 'Bottoms-Up' model. Both models together are often referred to in the same breath as "The Shower and Bidet".

However I prefer a different metaphor to describe an approach to Staff Development working from the bottom upwards. This is the:

2. **The Sellafield/Chernobyl Model** (Bottoms-up) In any institution such as an FE college there will be large numbers of energetic and enthusiastic members of staff all bursting with energy, splitting off spare neutrons in every direction and all very keen to get on with the job. The management sees this as dangerous and threatening. Containment systems such as timetables and Heads of Department are incorporated, and all the energy is absorbed and constrained. This method of Staff Development is described as unplanned and too fragmented; relying too much on containment, and possibly dangerous.

3. **The Subversive Model** (A Lateral Model: combining the best features of both Top Down and Bottoms-Up)

In any typical FE college, even those which have been re-organised recently along the lines of some sort of matrix system, most activity will still follow the established pattern of vertical subdivisions along subject or departmental lines. Staff Development and Open Learning are two examples of the kind of activity which must be allowed to flourish **laterally**, i.e. across the institution as a whole. Other activities which must also be organised and allowed to flourish laterally are Marketing, IT Development, Communication, Numeracy, Health and Safety, etc. A college will have to determine for itself how it is going to accomplish this, with or without a matrix structure. There are several ways of commencing the process without the need for conscious restructuring. Members of staff who are amenable to Open Learning can be suborned and recruited by various means. They are attracted to OL because of what one or more of its unique features have to offer them. They in turn will communicate this enthusiasm to others. The model works laterally and subversively.

Open Learning in Cumbria

Open Learning in Cumbria was not the outcome of MSC Open Tech funding but is the result of a cunning alliance between several sections of the Education Department, notably Further Education, Resources and Personnel. Following the successful completion of an Open Learning Feasibility Study in Spring 1985 it was decided by the Authority to use an Education Support Grant to produce Courseware for IT in NAFE as the basis of Cumbria's centrally managed Open Learning development.

The Cumbria Courseware Project funded from an ESG is geared to the production and use of Open Learning materials and courseware in and by Cumbria's FE Colleges. In turn the Project is expected to address the LEA's own staff training problems, and in particular the training of non-teaching staff in Health and Safety. It is an unusual animal and has been described by Paul Newby of the MSC as a Health and Safety training project riding on the back of an Open Learning project riding on the back of an Educational Support Grant for the production of Courseware for Information Technology in Non-Advanced Further Education.

The Cumbria Education Department remains one of the County's largest employers and is increasing its use of Open Learning as a means of delivering staff training and development to groups such as Lunchtime Supervisors, Laboratory Technicians, School Secretaries, Office Staff, Teachers and Lecturers, etc.

The County of Cumbria stretches from the shipbuilding town of Barrow-in-Furness north across the Lake District mountains to the Scottish border some distance beyond Carlisle and from the Pennine moorlands in the east to the twin towers of Sellafield on the Irish Sea coast. Cumbria has a population of less than half-a-million scattered across an area of 6,809 sq. km., making it one of the largest and most sparsely populated counties in England or Wales. This population is served by four FE colleges, situated in Carlisle, Kendal, Barrow and West Cumbria, in addition to a College of Agriculture and Forestry at Newton Rigg near Penrith, a College of Art and Design at Carlisle and Charlotte Mason College of Higher Education at Ambleside.

Because of the scattered population and the travel difficulties caused by mountainous geography the potential of Cumbria for the development of Open Learning is very great indeed, and the Authority has sought since 1984 to build on and develop earlier work in Open Learning and to fully embed all aspects of Open Learning (including the production of Open Learning materials and Courseware) into the County's FE system on an integrated and co-ordinated basis and in partnership with the County's Economic Development Department.

The importance of our own FE Staff Development both **by** and **for** Open Learning is recognised and was written into our now successful bid for an ESG Category XX for Open Learning development at the level of the six individual colleges.

Overall control and monitoring of the Courseware Project is exercised by the **Vice Principals' Steering Committee for ESGs** which is also responsible for the other IT in NAFE ESGs plus past ESGs for CELP, PICKUP, Open College etc together with the new Category XX ESG for Open Learning. The membership of this Steering Committee which meets about twice per term, is as follows:

Senior Education Officer (FE and Careers)
The Vice Principals of each of the 6 FE colleges in Cumbria
The Open Learning Development Officer
The Project Director CUSDIT
The County's CELP Co-ordinator (Economic Development Department)
Other personnel as appropriate

Each college now has an Open Learning Co-ordinator who is responsible for the development of Open Learning delivery and the co-ordination of Courseware production at each college. All Open Learning Co-ordinators meet regularly, about once every two months, and are as a group responsible to the Vice Principals' Steering Committee for Open Learning. The task of each Open Learning and Courseware Co-ordinator is to forge a link between College staff and the detail of the Open Learning project.

We also operate the Cumbria Gateway Centre for the Open College and we are concerned with the development of Open College business locally. We keep in close touch with national developments concerning Open Learning, CAL in FE etc. This Authority is acquiring a reputation as a leader in the embedding of Open Learning within an LEA and is able to provide a consultancy service to other Authorities.

Examples of Open Learning taking place at present in a number of Cumbria colleges include the Flexistudy schemes which allow adult students to study for GCE 'O' and 'A' levels from home, using learning packages produced by the National Extension College, Wolsey Hall, etc. with tutoring provided by the local college. Another **Open Learning Scheme in Modern Office Technology** is sponsored and paid for by the Manpower Services Commission and provides training in Computing and Wordprocessing for mature women at Carlisle, Kendal, Barrow and West Cumbria Colleges. These are housewives who have expressed a wish to return to office work. They study at home and also use the computers at the colleges on a 'drop-in' or appointment basis. Also, here and there throughout the County, small groups of adult students are enrolled with local colleges for Open Learning schemes in a variety of disciplines, e.g.; Refrigeration, Motor Vehicle Engineering, Road Haulage, Guest House Management, Computing, Teacher In-service Training, etc. It is estimated that over 500 students are following Open Learning schemes through Cumbria's FE colleges, and the volume of Open Learning work is increasing steadily in response to a growing demand from the public.

The number of students enrolled with the **Cumbria Open College Gateway Centre** is also increasing. In the Spring of this year, both Cumbria Education department and the MSC have agreed to sponsor schemes to pay the costs of unwaged and unemployed open learners under an unusual scheme known as Opportunity '88. Barrow College hopes soon to open the first Mathematics and Communication Open Learning workshop in the County, dedicated to the College's mainstream work in those subjects across the board. For the future, it is anticipated that Open Learning and related developments involving new learning technologies will become increasingly important at all levels of the education service and in adult training and updating.

Other current projects which also relate to Open Learning are two LCPs on **Computer Based Training (CBT)**, which ran during 1987/88, involving collaboration between Barrow and West Cumbria Colleges, and another proposed LCP on the analysis of Rural Training Needs which it is hoped to base at Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry at Newton Rigg. Also relevant is the network of **Training Access Points (TAP).** A possible future development may involve much closer co-operation between Cumbria TAP and Open Learning.

As regards Open Learning INSET a successful scheme is operating in 1987/88 under GRIST funding arrangements leading to the award of the **RSA/MISTT Diploma** (Modular Information Technology Scheme for Teachers and Trainers) for which Charlotte Mason College provides the academic leadership.

APPENDIX

Cumbria Education Department

Vice Principals' Steering Committee for ESGs

A Policy for Open Learning in Cumbria

1. Definition;

Open Learning is a method of widening access to learning and of providing flexible opportunities for study or training of all kinds for any person who wants to use them without the usual barriers of time, place, entry requirements, access, level or pace of study.

2. Overall Purpose for the Development of Open Learning in Cumbria.

2.1 To overcome the barriers of distance and difficulty of travel usually encountered by a scattered rural population, and to provide flexible solutions to problems of place, time and pace in meeting learning needs, including the provision of traditional FE courses where appropriate.

2.2 This overall purpose will be met by implementing the recommendations and developing the findings of the Cumbria Open Learning Feasibility Study, January to March 1985. This will entail the pursuit of the following Objectives.

3. Objectives

3.1 To develop a coherent and credible system of Open Learning for the whole County. Any policy adopted should be detailed enough to provide adequate guidance but flexible enough to take account of the workings of individual colleges and their obvious wish to develop such a policy further and in their own ways.

3.2 To open up new markets for the Further Education service in identifying and meeting the learning and training needs of local business and industry and of the local community, and in doing so to improve and broaden the County's economic base through the provision of more effective adult training.

3.3 To complement where possible the courses already on offer in Cumbria's FE colleges, and in doing so to strengthen the basis of existing provision.

3.4 To develop the expertise necessary to meet learning needs in a flexible manner and by the use of new training technologies.

3.5 To meet the needs of the learner in a flexible way.

4. The Structure of Open Learning Delivery

4.1 A Steering Committee constituted as below shall be responsible for the overall direction and marketing of Open Learning in Cumbria. Its responsibilities shall include recommendations on policy as appropriate to the Education Committee, and the determination of issues that may affect the delivery of Open Learning in Cumbria as a whole, and such as may arise between colleges, e.g. the approval on behalf of the Authority of contracts or franchises for the delivery of Open Learning.

4.2 The Steering Committee shall be constituted as follows;

One Vice Principal from each college
The Senior Education Officer for FE, who shall chair the meetings
The Open Learning Development Officer

4.3 Arrangements for the delivery of Open Learning in individual colleges shall remain the line responsibility of the management of each college, under its Instrument and Articles of Government. Other persons or bodies shall be deemed to exercise an advisory role only, except in relation to the powers vested in the Steering Committee for Open Learning as described above.

4.4 The role of the Open Learning Development Officer shall be as laid down in that Officer's Job Description. The Officer shall seek to work closely with college personnel at all levels and with other agencies to develop Open Learning expertise, to provide leadership, to represent and market Cumbria's Open Learning activity as required.

4.5 The Open Learning Development Officer shall negotiate on behalf of the Steering Committee or the Authority as required with outside agencies such as the MSC and with Open Learning materials producers. Any contracts or franchises negotiated shall normally be for the equal benefit of all the County's colleges insofar as they are able to take advantage of them.

4.6 Each college will seek to appoint a suitable person to act as Open Learning Co-ordinator for that College, who will handle enquiries and referrals as appropriate, provide leadership in Open Learning development and represent its needs within the College. Open Learning Co-ordinators will work closely with the County's Open Learning Development Officer. The Open Learning Co-ordinators' Group will provide advice and support to the Steering Committee through the Open Learning Development Officer.

4.7 Every person employed as an Open Learning tutor by the Authority shall be a full time member of the staff of a College or other FE institution, or attached thereto by way of part- time contract or secondment.

5. Marketing and Referral

5.1 The Open Learning Development Officer shall seek to work closely with each of the colleges in marketing Open Learning, collaborating with their publicity and dealing with enquiries.

5.2 In the development of its own marketing strategy, each college shall take account of Open Learning as a mode of delivery available to prospective clients.

5.3 All requests for Open Learning shall be referred in the first instance to the nearest local college and should this be impracticable, then to another college where delivery may be possible.

5.4 It will be necessary for each college to keep a record of referred enquiries and keep the Open Learning Development Officer informed as to action taken.

6. Arrangements for the Delivery of Open Learning at individual Colleges

6.1 Each college will need to establish from within its own resources a balance between Open Learning and other work.

6.2 In making a decision as to whether to meet a request for Open Learning, each college should take account of the need for initial pre-entry counselling, advice, consultancy and guidance, assessment and administration.

6.3 Conditions of Service for staff taking part in Open Learning shall be as agreed from time to time with NATFHE

6.4 The cost of using telephones to provide tutorial support must fall on the learner.

6.5 There shall be some means of recording the progress of each individual Open Learner from the time when he or she registers a specific enquiry at a particular college, through the counselling ,tutoring, assignment, marking, assessment and certification stages until he or she can be deemed to have completed or become no longer active.

6.6 Provision shall be made for the assessment and certification of Open Learners as required.

6.7 Staff shall be allowed to become involved in consultancy or other similar duties on behalf of the College or Authority in accordance with agreed arrangements.

7. Pricing and financial arrangements

7.1 The learner or his sponsor shall pay the agreed costs for Open Learning materials and tutoring.

7.2 The Authority shall seek to adopt County-wide pricing policies for Open Learning. Having regard to 6.1 above. these pricing arrangements shall be consistent as far as practicable with those which the learner could enjoy elsewhere for similar benefits.

7.3 It is envisaged that the following pricing categories will apply:

Category 1. Where a comparable college course exists, pricing shall be consistent therewith, plus the cost of any Open Learning package which the learner is required to purchase or lease. In the case of Open Learning however, reduced fee or gratis 'infill' arrangements shall not be operated.

Category 2. Where no traditional or comparable college course exists, the tutoring of individual Open Learning packages shall be priced on the basis of full-cost recovery, having regard to likely overheads. The advice of the Open Learning Development Officer shall be sought in determining pricing and that Officer will publish a price list of the more popular packages, including tutoring.

Category 3. Colleges in consultation with the Open Learning Development Officer shall determine the pricing of custom-designed courses to meet the specific needs of local employers.

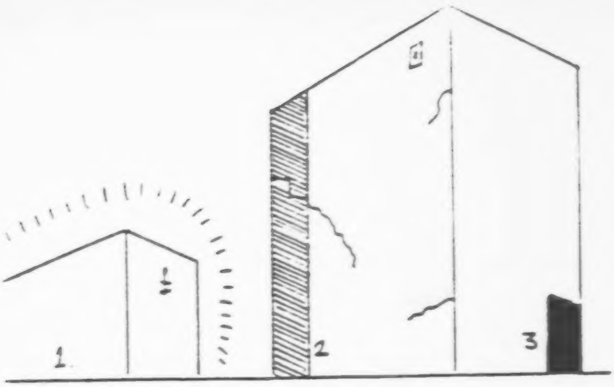
7.4 Additional personal tutorial time may be purchased pro- rata on the basis of Category 2 above.

7.5 Fee income for Open Learning work must be credited to the Authority. Only that received specifically in respect of the purchase by learners of Open Learning materials and that for which specific authorisation to recycle has been received from the County Treasurer is subsequently available for spending by the College.

7.6 Discounts earned for bulk purchase of Open Learning materials through the Open Learning Development Officer shall be passed on to the College.

7.7 The general strategy shall be to provide Open Learning opportunities using existing materials and packages where possible.

7.8 Adequate resources shall be made available when a college or a member of staff is required to write or produce Open Learning materials.



Embedding Open Learning: Models which have not worked

1. **The Open Tech Luxury Superstore 1982-87 Limited** (Causes friction, rivalries and jealousies, because of what is often perceived as too generous over-funding and an arrogant attitude towards traditional college markets)

2. **The Flexistudy Department** (Becomes too easily constrained within the college's vertical subdivisions)

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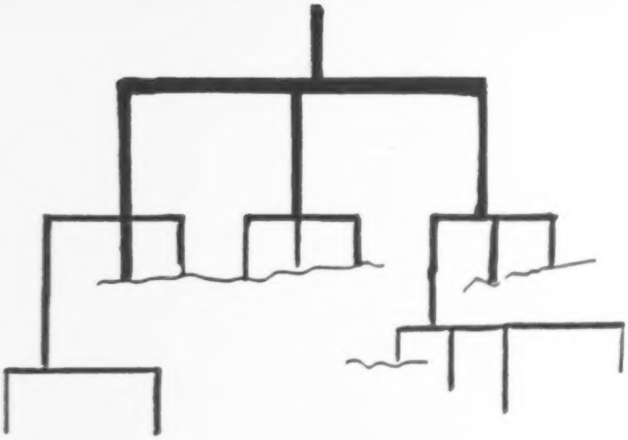
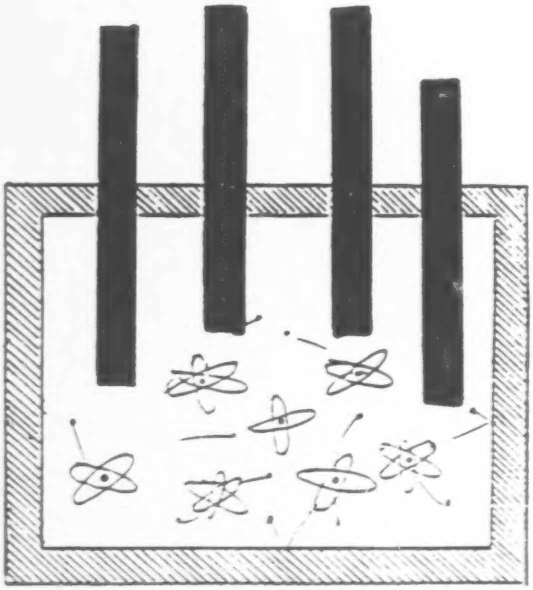


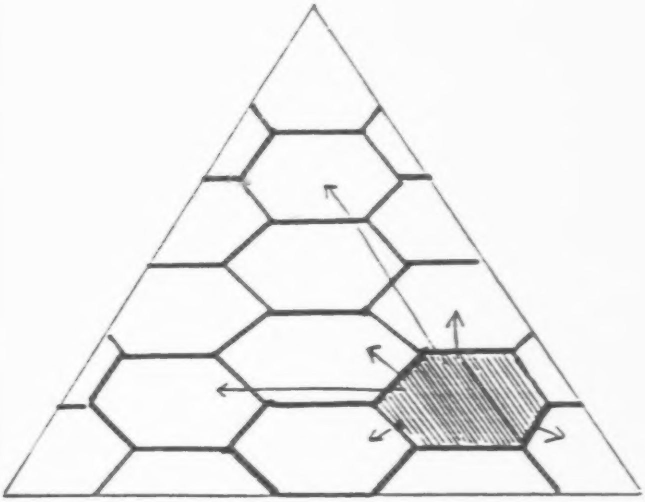
Models of Staff Development;

1. The Cascade Model (Top Down)



Models of Staff Development;

2. The Sellafield/Chernobyl Model (Bottoms-up, but unplanned and too fragmented; relies too much on containment, possibly dangerous)



Models of Staff Development;

3. The Subversive Model (A Lateral Model; combining the best features of both Top Down and Bottoms-Up)

REPLAN OPEN LEARNING ENTERPRISE (ROLE)

Deanne Dunstan

Replan Open Learning Enterprise (ROLE): a project endeavouring to improve the accessibility of learning opportunities to the unwaged of West Cumbria.

Open Learning can be defined as any method of learning which allows people to learn at a time, place and pace most accessible/appropriate to them. However, how is it possible to successfully implement this without, first of all, identifying the individual needs of the learner? This was the question the ROLE project sought to answer in March 1987 when it conducted a preliminary investigation into the educational needs of unwaged adults in West Cumbria.

Locating the unwaged, i.e. all those who have no personal income, presented a problem due to the absence of comprehensive records listing all those who were not in paid employment. The solution to this was to conduct a door-to-door survey, with the aim that once the target group had been identified, the next issue was to discover their problems, perceptions and requirements they had regarding education.

The main aims of the survey were as follows:-

1. To identify potential clients for open learning.

2. To identify problems regarding the take-up of any form of learning.

3. To find out how people perceived/defined "education".

4. To discover how far people had progressed with their formal education.

5. To find out how much use was made of the "free services" e.g. libraries, Careers Service, Job Centres, Unemployment Centres.

6. To discover any differences between those living in urban and rural areas. N.B. The whole of West Cumbria, with the exceptions of Workington, Whitehaven and Maryport, is classed as a Rural Development Area.

7. To discover if aspirations to further learning related to the level of previous formal education attained.

8. To discover if age had any effect on educational needs or problems encountered.

9. To discover if there were any differences between council and private householders in their perception of education.

10. To identify subject areas potential clients might be interested in and for what reason, i.e. with a view to gaining employment, to up-date existing skills or for leisure.

199 people were interviewed and an equal ratio was maintained between private and council householders. (However, some of the interviewees did not belong to the target group).

Responses are summarised below:-

1. Perception of "education" - the majority of people equated education with school.

2. 75% had left school with no formal qualifications.

3. The most frequently used agency was the public library. The 18-25 age group generally made more use of the free services, in particular the Job Centre and the Careers Service. Those over the age of 25 therefore, presumably perceived the Careers Service as catering for a younger age group and were not aware that adult guidance was available to them.

4. 60-70% had not thought of doing any further education: this perhaps links in with their misconception re education.

5. Only 5% had progressed to further learning, e.g. undertaken voluntary work, attended ante-natal classes, used the facilities of an Unemployment Centre, enrolled on a college course.

6. The remaining 95% had not become involved in further learning for the following reasons:-

The survey revealed that barriers to access are of a practical and subjective nature - these are outlined below in order of priority -

i) - family commitments/travel/and cost/cost of courses/additional materials. (practical)

ii) - never knew where to go for information. (practical)

iii) - did not know what educational provision was available (practical)

iv) - did not know what subjects to take. (practical)

v) - did not enjoy school. (subjective)

vi) - could not learn at school. (subjective)

vii) - lack of confidence. (subjective)

viii) - apathy. (subjective)

Family commitments was the main problem preventing the take-up of further education in the 18-25 group, and in the 35-45 age group, it was due to lack of confidence.

The following points may be worth noting in regard to the above:

a) West Cumbria is a large, relatively isolated area consisting of both semi-urban and rural communities, poorly served by public transport.

b) A county policy relating to a full remission on fees for the Adult Unemployed does not exist. In the local F.E. Centres, the target group pay half of the normal fee, and a similar policy exists at West Cumbria College.

7. 45% stated that they would be interested in further learning: those in the 18-25 group saw themselves as learning with a view to employment, whilst the 35-45 group wished to learn for leisure purposes: perhaps from this, it can be assumed that those who are 35+, have low expectations regarding their return to the employment market. There also seems to be a strong correlation between aspirations and the level of formal qualifications attained - with 75% leaving formal education with no qualifications, aspirations and expectations are low. Interestingly enough, those living in rural areas said they did not have the time to further their learning (at the time of the survey) but recent events have proved this not to be the case.

Once the perceptions and requirements of the adult unwaged had been identified, it was then possible to inform educational providers and policy makers of the survey's findings, in the hope that this would lead to a review of existing policies and provision. This investigation entitled "Why Ask Me?", recommended that the following be provided in order for an equal opportunities form of provision be catered for in West Cumbria.

1. Cost is a major barrier which prevents access to education.
- possible action - review existing policy on fee payments.

2. Develop "outreach" facilities in local communities.

3. Expand existing creche facilities and make provision for those that do not exist at present.

4. Appoint Educational Guidance Counsellors within institutions and organisations.
(The secondment of a Careers Officer to Cumbria Training Access Points (TAP) has highlighted the need for an educational and guidance referral system to exist).

5. Greater communication needs to exist between agencies dealing with adults, so that in turn, they are better equipped to offer support, information and advice to clients.

ROLE's activities since the publication of the "Why Ask Me?" report have sought to meet the needs of the client group and are outlined below:-

1. The compilation of an Adult Learning Network directory - a joint venture between ROLE and Cumbria Training Access Points (TAP) - this will provide a comprehensive list of all agencies offering educational provision. Research proved that not only were unwaged adults unaware of the type and scope of learning opportunities available but, likewise, agencies were not always aware of the provision neighbouring services offered.

2. The compilation of an "Information Pack" for the unwaged. Individual groups within the unwaged framework will be directly responsible in determining the contents of the pack.

3. Publication of a Newsletter - this will raise the awareness of the unwaged as to the range of provision and support services available. By directly providing essential information to the consumer, the consumer becomes empowered and is then in a position to help him/herself in a positive manner.

4. The provision of an educational guidance facility.

5. The development of outreach mechanisms - ROLE, once again in collaboration with other agencies, has successfully held Information Open Days in both rural and urban areas in West Cumbria. At these events, clients have had the opportunity not only to seek information on educational and training opportunities, but also on Welfare Rights. Taster/practical activities have also been available.

6. The provision of Open Learning Packs - ROLE has been actively assisting clients by loaning them Open Learning Packs free of charge. A list of volunteer tutors is currently being compiled.

7. Financial assistance - The reimbursement of travelling expenses has meant that clients from the target group have been able to pursue learning opportunities at either the local college and/or Unemployment Centre.

8. The development of local learning circles - One in particular has led to an Unemployment Centre offering a creche facility as a result of ROLE's participation. A local community group's need for Basic Skills provision has led to a core group being formed at the local Community Centre. The possible formation of a Women's Health group is also on the agenda.

These examples serve to demonstrate how the ROLE project is actively seeking to improve the accessibility of educational opportunities to the unwaged of West Cumbria. However, open learning will only actively exist within West Cumbria when the "men in suits" collectively act upon the needs of the unwaged.

Deanne Dunstan - Project Manager - ROLE

ROLE is funded by the Department of Education and Science through Replan and is managed by The West Cumbria Open Learning Trust.
The "Why Ask Me?" report was compiled by the first Project Manager, Jane Lucy, who resigned due to illness.

The presentation at the Conference was given by John Millar, Treasurer of the West Cumbria Open Learning Trust.

Appendix 1 - List of Contributors

Opening Plenary Session

HILARY TEMPLE, How Open is Open Learning?

Parallel Groups

DON BINSTED, Openness in CBT/IV

RICHARD BOOT and VIVIEN HODGSON, Open Learning: Philosophy or Expediency

CHRIS McALLISTER, Embedding Open Learning in Public Sector Further Education

Ms. B J MILBURN, Open Learning in Nursing

DON OSBORN and GLORIA LEE, Cross-Cultural Differences in the Perceptions of Open and Distance Learning in France and England with Special Reference to Management Education and Training.

Dr. MARY BENWELL and PETER HUGHES, Open Learning Within the Community of the Workplace

ROY ROBOTHAM and SUE GALLACHER, Supported SelfStudy in Cumbria TVEI

S.J. ROSE and R.J. PARKER, A Paradox? Open Learning in a Bureaucracy

JOHN SANDERS and MARY HAMILTON, Open to Question: Opportunities in Adult Basic Education

ALISON BAKER, Writing a Study Guide for a Textbook

ANGIE BALLARD, The OU/MSC Community Programme: Barefoot Educators.

Dr. PETER CRITTEN and MARTIN EMERSON, Supporting Open Learning in the Hospitality and Recreation Industry

CHRIS GREENWOOD and F. HOOPER, Developing a Strategy for Open Learning: To Sell or to Serve.

JANE KITTO, YMCA Distance Learning Project

ROBIN SNELL, Fostering Open Learning in and through Work

DEREK CROSSLAND and JOHN FAGAN, Open Learning in Action in Lancashire

KEITH DAVIES, Supporting Autonomy in the Learner

DAVID FISHER and JOAN DUROSE, Using Open Learning to aid Management Development in the NHS

FRED LOCKWOOD, The Provision of Preparatory Materials in Distance Learning

DAVID McCONNELL, Computer-Mediated Communications: Windows on the World

Plenary Sessions

MICHAEL RICHARDSON, The Open University and Open Learning

RICHARD FREEMAN, The Open College and Open Learning

Parallel Groups

TONY DODDS, Distance and Open Learning for Refugees in the Third World

STEPHEN FOX, The Production and Distribution of Knowledge through Distance Learning

ANDRE MAILER and JO COOPER, Facilitation in Learner-Centred Programmes

JOHN MILLAR, ROLE - Replan Open Learning Enterprise in West Cumbria

IAN NIXEY, Marketing Open Learning

MIKE PEDLER, The Manor Employment Project, A Bottom-up Approach to Development

Closing Plenary Session

IAN CUNNINGHAM, How Open Can Open Learning Become

Appendix 2 - List of Delegates:

University of Lancaster

23rd - 25th March, 1988.

LIST OF DELEGATES

BAKER, Dr. Alison	Council for National Academic Awards
BALLARD, Angela	The Open University (IET)
BELL, Dr. R. E.	The Open University - School of Education
BENWELL, Mary	Road Transport Industry Training Board

BETJEMANN, Dr. A.	Media Services Unit, University of Lancaster.
BINSTEAD, Don	Department of Management Learning, Lancaster University.
BLACKIE, Mrs Edna	Newcastle Polytechnic
BOOT, Richard	Department of Management Learning, Lancaster University.
CARR, Ronnie	The Open University in Scotland
COOPER, Ms. Jo	North East London Polytechnic
CRAWFORD, Mr C.	Raffles Neighbourhood Office, Carlisle.
CRITTEN, Peter	Hotel and Catering Training Board
CROSLAND, Derek	Lancashire Open Learning Project
CUNNINGHAM, Ian	Ashridge Management College
DAVIES, William	Midtech, St. Albans College.
DODDS, Tony	International Extension College
DUNSTAN, Deanne	Replan Open Learning Enterprise, Cumbria.
DUROSE, Mrs Joan	North Staffordshire Health Authority
EASTWOOD, Jennifer	Bristol and West Building Society
ELLINGHAM, Richard	Cheshire Open Learning Support Unit
FISHER, David	Royal Shrewsbury Staff Development Unit
FOX, Nicholas	Comett Technical Assistance Unit, Brussels.
FOX, Stephen	Department of Management Learning, Lancaster University.
FREE, Hazel	Educational Research, Lancaster University.
FREEMAN, Richard	The Open College
FULLER, Aliso	Educational Research, Lancaster University.
GALLAGHER, Sue	TVEI - Carlisle.
GARVEY, Paul	Waltham Forest College
GLENDINNING, Brian	Ruston Gas Turbines Limited
GREENWOOD, Mr C	Devon C.C. Education Committee
GREGORY, Michael	Mid-Warwickshire College of Further Education.
HAMILTON, Dr. Mary	Educational Research, Lancaster University.
HODGSON, Dr. Vivien	Department of Management Learning, Lancaster University.
HOOPER, Mr F.	Devon County Council Education Committee
HOWELL, Lisa	Pizzaland International
HOWIE, David	The Open University
HUGHES, Peter	Road Transport Industry Training Board
JOHNSON, Anne	Education Department, York University.
JONES, Mrs Heather	Polytechnic of Wales
JONES, Mick	The Open University
KITTO, Jane	YMCA National College
KUUSELA, Mauno	Jyrankola Settlement, Finland.
LARSEN, Sinikka	University of Helsinki
LOCKWOOD, Fred	The Open University
McALLISTER, Mr C.	Cumbria Education Department
McCONNELL, Dr. D.	University of Bath - School of Education.
MACHELL, Mrs Joan	Educational Research, Lancaster University
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